

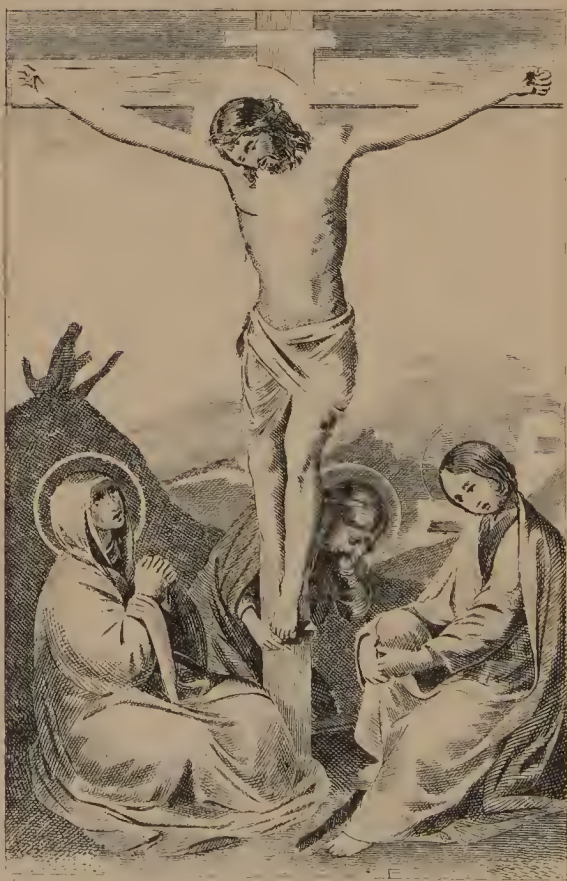
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THE CRUCIFIXION.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

AND THE

Means for Obtaining them.

CONTAINING

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ;

TREATISE ON PRAYER AS THE GREAT MEANS OF OBTAINING SALVATION ;

DIRECTIONS FOR ACQUIRING THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES ;

RULE OF LIFE FOR A CHRISTIAN, ETC.

BY

ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI,

BISHOP OF ST. AGATHA, AND FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY
REDEEMER.

Newly translated from the Italian,

AND EDITED BY

ROBERT A. COFFIN,

PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.



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RESCRIPT OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS IX.

(TRANSLATION.)

“ MOST HOLY FATHER,

“ The Bishop of Southwark in England, in representing to your Holiness how the Redemptorist Fathers have had the consolation to see an immense good result from the condescension with which your Holiness was pleased to praise the *German* edition of the works of St. Alphonsus, humbly begs to be authorized to bless, in the name of your Holiness, the translation already commenced, and in part published, of the pious works of St. Alphonsus *in English*.”

“ In an audience with his Holiness on the 13th of November, 1853, our most holy Lord, by Divine Providence, Pope Pius IX., at the request of me, the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, was graciously pleased to grant the above petition; charging, however, the conscience of the petitioner with faithfulness in the translation.

“ Given at Rome, from the Palace of the Sacred Congregation, on the day and in the year as above.

“ Gratis, &c., &c.

AL. BARNABO, Secretary.”

Imprimatur.

N. CARD. WISEMAN.

May 1, 1857.

PREFACE.

THE name of St. Alphonsus is too well known and loved, and the merits of his works too well appreciated, to make it necessary for the editor to say more than a few words by way of introduction to the present volume.

The favourable manner in which the Prospectus of the new translations was received, has fully justified the grounds for believing that the time had now arrived, when England and Ireland would welcome, with the same satisfaction as have other countries, a complete edition of the Saint's works, presented to them by the children of his own congregation.

It would be impossible to place before the reader the many letters of encouragement and support which the editor received at the commencement of the undertaking, especially from the venerable Prelates, and other distinguished Ecclesiastics in England and Ireland, whose approbation he was the most anxious to secure, and for which he desires in this place to express his grateful acknowledgements.

It is unnecessary to do more than just allude here to those still higher sanctions and approbations of the works of St. Alphonsus, conferred upon them by so many sovereign Pontiffs; but lest it might be objected that their interest and utility have lessened, and that their influence was a matter of time and place, of national character and disposition, the editor cannot refrain from inserting here, in order to meet such an objection, the striking words of two who have occupied the chair of St. Peter; and who, though at an interval of more than a quarter of a century the one from the other, bear the same testimony as well to

the peculiar merits of the works of St. Alphonsus, as to the great utility of publishing a complete edition of them not only in Italy, but in those countries, of which it is sometimes said that they are too cold to appreciate and enter into the glowing spirit, and almost enthusiastic devotion of a warm Italian heart.

Pope Leo XII., in a Brief dated Feb. 19th, 1825, to Signor Marietti, of Turin, approving of his complete edition of the works of St. Alphonsus, classes the Saint among the number of the pious and learned writers raised up by Divine Providence to stem the torrent of bad publications which at that time was coming down on society at large, and says of him, "that he is pre-eminent for a most tender piety and devotion, and for the singular zeal with which, in his writings, he urges the frequentation of the Sacraments, and inculcates the love of Jesus Christ, and confidence in His merits and mercy, together with devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mother of God and to the Saints which are indeed the surest bulwarks against every kind of demoralisation." And of Signor Marietti himself, his Holiness says, "that in collecting and publishing the works of such a writer, he had deserved well, not only of religion, but, if it did but know its own real good, of society in general."

In like manner, his present Holiness Pope Pius IX., in a letter to the Rev. Father Hugues, dated November 25, 1846, is pleased to express his joy and consolation on hearing that the German edition of St. Alphonsus' works had met with such great success, "at a moment, too, when, by the insidious devices of the enemies of religion, so many pestilential books are in circulation on every side, to corrupt and deprave the minds and morals especially of those not on their guard against them." "Wherefore," his Holiness continues, "we greatly commend your pious undertaking, and we encourage you to continue with still greater diligence in endeavouring to spread the most wholesome writings of St. Alphonsus every day more and more. To read them cannot but be of the greatest advan-

tage, not only to Christians in general, but also to ecclesiasties, and to those especially who have the care and direction of souls. For the works of that most holy and most learned man, written with an extraordinary tenderness of piety and devotion, breathe in every page a special love for Jesus Christ, and confidence in His merits and merey; they inspire the highest devotion to the Virgin Mother of God and to the Saints; they inflame men's hearts with the desire of frequenting the most holy Sacraments, and furnish a most copious supply of excellent admonitions, counsels, and injunctions for procuring and carrying on the work of the salvation of souls."

Nothing is wanting to add force to such testimonies as these; they speak for themselves. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the present edition rests also under the shadow and protection of St. Peter, having received the benediction of the Holy Father, in the form which is here prefixed.

With regard to the present volume, the editor trusts that the reader will find in it what it professes to be,—a Manual of the Practice of all the Christian Virtues; and he believes that it is impossible for any one to make use of it with a good will, and with an earnest desire to advance in the way of perfection, corresponding to his state in life, without finding himself led on as it were irresistibly to the spirit of prayer, and to a more tender love of our dearest Lord and His most Blessed Mother; and if so, the aim which St. Alphonsus had in view will have been gained, as, indeed, it has been hitherto, wherever his works have been known and read.

Instances, moreover, might be mentioned of persons who owed their conversion, under God, to having met with *The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ, The Treatise on Prayer, &c., &c.* Works of perhaps greater eloquence, humanly speaking, of a more finished style, had left little or no impression on their souls; sermons on the terrors of the Divine judgments and the torments of an eternal fire had been to them as unmeaning words;

and so for many a sad long year they remained in the cold indifference of a sinful life, until at length St. Alphonsus, with his oft-repeated words, *I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee ; Pray, and you shall be saved ; Pray, for God will hear you ; Pray, and heaven is yours*, roused them from the sleep of death ; opened a new world as it were before them ; filled them with encouragement and hope ; spoke to them of sweeter joys and more lasting pleasures ; and led them with broken but loving hearts to seek forgiveness through the intercession of Mary in the Sacred Heart of Jesus crucified.

The victory which neither eloquence nor learning could achieve was reserved for the irresistible power of the simplicity of a heart burning with the love of God and with desire for the salvation of souls.

That Almighty God will deign in like manner to make use of the present volume for the welfare both of those who are going on to perfection, and of those who, alas, are strangers to the love of Jesus, and to the compassion of His dearest Mother, who do not, and cannot, or rather know not, how to pray,—of this there can be no doubt ; for what He has done of old, He does now, and will ever do.

The success, then, of the present volume, as indeed of the whole undertaking, the editor leaves unreservedly in the hands of God ; and should the pains and labours which have been bestowed upon it be of any worth, to Him, and to Him alone, be the praise.

“ Neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase.”

In conclusion, the editor will only add, that all the references given by St. Alphonsus have been carefully corrected and verified, as far as it was possible. They have been placed in an Appendix, and numbered according to the small numbers in the text. The sign * is prefixed in the instances in which the editor was unable to procure the authors, or to find the passages referred to.

The editor desires to avail himself of this opportunity of expressing his sincere thanks to the several friends who,

by their learning, advice, and otherwise, have kindly assisted him in the present volume.

ROBERT ASTON COFFIN, C.S.S.R.

*St. Mary's, Clapham,
June 21, 1854.*

P.S. While the preceding pages were passing through the press, the editor received the following letters from their Graces the Primates of Ireland, which he is happy to be able to insert here.

Dublin, June 29, 1854.

MY DEAR FR. COFFIN,

It has afforded me great gratification to learn that you are about to present the public with an English translation of the works of St. Alphonsus Liguori. The writings of that learned and holy Bishop are most instructive and edifying, and replete with the true spirit of Catholic piety. It will therefore be an immense advantage to have them published in a language in which they can be read by all the Faithful in these kingdoms. I wish you every success in so pious and meritorious an undertaking, which I trust will be duly appreciated and encouraged by all Catholics.

I have the honour to be, with sincerest esteem,

Your devoted servant,

✠ PAUL CULLEN.

Armagh, June 20, 1854.

REV. DEAR SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular, and of the Prospectus of the Complete Edition of the Works of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

I most gladly welcome this announcement; and I shall be most happy to give my support to an undertaking that ought to rejoice the heart of every one who is anxious for the progress of piety in the world.

Praying that you may live to see your labour crowned with success, I remain, reverend dear Sir,

Your faithful servant in Christ,

✠ JOSEPH DIXON.



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The Practice

OF THE

LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST,

TAKEN FROM THE WORDS OF ST. PAUL,

“Charity is patient, is kind,” &c.—1 *Cor.* xiii. 4.

ADDRESSED TO THOSE SOULS WHO ARE IN EARNEST TO ADVANCE IN THE
WAY OF PERFECTION.

“If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.”

1 *Cor.* xvi. 22.

CHAPTER I.

HOW DESERVING JESUS CHRIST IS OF OUR LOVE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE
LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN HIS PASSION.

1. THE whole sanctity and perfection of a soul consists in loving Jesus Christ, our God, our Sovereign Good, and our Redeemer. Whoever loves Me, says Jesus Christ Himself, shall be loved by My Eternal Father: “My Father loves you because you have loved Me” (St. John xvi. 27). Some, says St. Francis of Sales, make perfection consist in an austere life; others in prayer; others in frequenting the Sacraments; others in alms-deeds. But they deceive themselves: perfection consists in loving God with our whole heart. The Apostle wrote: “Above all things . . . have charity, which is the bond of perfection” (Col. iii. 14). It is charity which keeps united and preserves all the virtues that render a man perfect. Hence St. Augustine said:

‘Love God, and do whatever you please ;’ because a soul which loves God is taught by that same love never to do any thing that will displease Him, and to leave nothing undone that may please Him.

2. But perhaps God does not deserve all our love ? “He has loved us with an everlasting love” (Jer. xxxi. 3). O man, says the Lord, behold I was the first to love thee. Thou wast not yet in the world, nay, the world itself was not, and I already loved thee. As long as I am God, I love thee ; as long as I have loved Myself, I have also loved thee. With good reason, therefore, did St. Agnes, that young holy virgin, reply to those who wished to unite her to an earthly spouse : ‘I am engaged to another Lover. Go,’ said she, ‘O lovers of this world, cease to sue my love ; my God was the first to love me. He has loved me from all eternity : it is but just, then, for me to give Him all my affections, and to love none other but Him.’

3. As Almighty God knew that man is won by kindness, He determined to lavish His gifts upon him, and so take captive the affections of his heart. For this reason He said, “I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love” (Isa. xi. 4). I will catch men by those very snares by which they are naturally caught, that is, by the snares of love. And such exactly are all the favors of God to man. After having given him a soul created in His own image, with memory, understanding, and will, and a body with its senses, He created heaven and earth for him, yes, all that exists, all for the love of man,—the firmament, the stars, the planets, the seas, the rivers, the fountains, the hills, the plains, metals, fruits, and a countless variety of animals : and all these creatures that they might minister to the uses of man, and that man might love Him in gratitude for so many admirable gifts. ‘Heaven and earth, and all things, tell me to love Thee,’ says St. Augustine. ‘My Lord,’ he said, ‘whatever I behold on the earth, or above the earth, all speak to me, and exhort me to love Thee ; because all assure me that Thou hast made them for the love of me.’ The Abbot de Raneé, founder of La Trappe, when from his hermitage he stood and surveyed the hills, the fountains, the birds, the flowers,

the planets, and the skies, felt himself animated by each one of these creatures to love that God, who had created all through love to him.

4. In like manner St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, when she held any beautiful flower in her hand, was enkindled by the sight of it with love to God; and she would say: 'And God, then, has thought from all eternity of creating this flower for love of me!' Thus did that flower become, as it were, a dart of love, which sweetly wounded her and united her more and more to her God. On the other hand, St. Teresa, at the sight of trees, fountains, rivers, lakes, or meadows, declared that all these fair things upbraided her for her ingratitude in loving so coldly a God who created them that He might be loved by her. To the like purpose is it related of a pious hermit, that when walking through the country, it seemed to him that the plants and flowers in his path reproached him for the cold return of love he made to God; so that he went along gently striking them with his staff, and saying to them: 'Oh, be silent, be silent; you call me an ungrateful wretch; you tell me God has made you for love of me, and yet I do not love Him; but now I understand you, be silent, be silent; do not reproach me more.'

5. But God was not satisfied with giving us so many beautiful creatures. He has gone to such lengths to gain our love, as to give Himself to us. The Eternal Father did not hesitate to give us even His only-begotten Son: "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son" (St. John iii. 16). When the Eternal Father saw that we were all dead, and deprived of His grace by sin, what did He do? for the immense love, nay, as the Apostle writes, for the too great love He bore us, He sent His Beloved Son to make atonement for us; and so to restore to us that life which sin had robbed us of: Who "through His exceeding charity with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ" (Eph. ii. 45). And in granting us His Son (not sparing His Son, that he might spare us), He has granted us every good together with Him, His grace, His love, and paradise, since assuredly all these gifts are much

less than that of His Son : “ He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things ? ” (Rom. viii. 32).

6. And so, likewise, the Son, through His love towards us, has given Himself wholly to us : “ Who loved us, and delivered himself for us ” (Gal. ii. 20). In order to redeem us from everlasting death, and to recover for us the Divine grace and Heaven which we had forfeited, He became man, and put on flesh like our own : “ *Et verbum caro factum est*, And the Word was made flesh.” Behold then a God reduced to nothingness : “ But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . and in habit found as a man ” (Phil. ii. 7). Behold the Sovereign of the world humbling Himself so low as to assume the form of a servant, and to subject Himself to all the miseries which the rest of men endure.

7. But what is more astonishing still is, that He could very well have saved us without dying and without suffering at all ; but no, He chose a life of sorrow and contempt, and a death of bitterness and ignominy even to the expiring on a cross,—the gibbet of infamy, the award of vilest criminals : “ He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross ” (Phil. ii. 8). But why, if He could have ransomed us without suffering, why should He choose to die, and to die on a cross ? To show us how he loved us. “ He loved us, and delivered Himself for us.” He loved us, and because He loved us, He delivered himself up to sorrows, and ignominies, and to a death more cruel than ever any man endured in this world.

8. Hence that great love of Jesus Christ, St. Paul, took occasion to say : “ The charity of Christ presseth us ” (2 Cor. v. 14). Wishing to show us by these words that it is not so much the sufferings themselves of Jesus Christ as his love in enduring them, that obliges us, and, as it were, constrains us to love Him. Let us hear what St. Francis of Sales says on this text : ‘ When we remember that Jesus Christ, true God, has loved us to such an excess as to suffer death, and the death of the cross, for us, our hearts are, as it were, put in a wine-press, and suffer

violence, until love be extorted from them ; but a violence which, the stronger it is, becomes the more delightful.' He then goes on to say, 'Ah ! why do we not therefore cast ourselves on Jesus crucified, to die on the cross with Him, who has chosen to die for love of us? I will hold Him (should we say), and I will never let Him go; I will die with Him, and will be consumed in the flames of His love. One flame shall consume this Divine Creator and His miserable creature. My Jesus gives Himself unreservedly to me, and I give myself unreservedly to Him. I will live and die on His loving Breast; neither life nor death shall ever separate me from Him. O eternal Love, my soul longs after Thee, and makes choice of Thee for ever. Come, O Holy Spirit, and inflame our hearts with love. O love, O death, to die to all other loves, to live solely to that of Jesus Christ! O Redeemer of our souls, grant that we may eternally sing: Live, Jesus! I love Jesus; live, Jesus, whom I love! yes, I love Jesus, who reigns for evermore.'

9. The love of Jesus Christ towards men created in Him a longing desire for the moment of His death, when His love should be fully manifested to them; hence He was wont to say in His lifetime: "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (St. Luke xii. 50). I have to be baptised in my own blood; and how do I feel myself straitened with the desire that the hour of my passion may soon arrive; for then man will know the love which I bear him! Hence St. John, speaking of that night in which Jesus began His passion, writes, "Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (St. John xiii. 1). The Redeemer called that hour His own hour (*hora ejus*), because the time of His death was the time desired by Him; as it was then that he wished to give mankind the last proof of His love, by dying for them upon a cross, overwhelmed by sorrows.

10. But what could have ever induced a God to die as a malefactor upon a cross between two sinners, with

such insult to His divine majesty? 'Who did this?' asks St. Bernard; he answers, 'It was love, careless of its dignity.' Ah, love indeed, when it tries to make itself known, does not seek what is becoming to the dignity of the lover, but what will serve best to declare itself to the object loved. St. Francis of Paula therefore had good reason to cry out at the sight of a crucifix, 'O charity, O charity, O charity!' And in like manner, when we look upon Jesus on the cross, we should all exclaim, O love, O love, O love!

11. Ah, if faith had not assured us of it, who could ever have believed that a God, almighty, most happy, and the Lord of all, should have condescended to love man to such an extent that He seems to go out of Himself for the love of him? We have seen Wisdom itself, that is the Eternal Word, become foolish through the excessive love He bore to man! So spoke St. Laurence Justinian. 'We see Wisdom itself infatuated through excess of love.' St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said the same: one day, being in ecstasy, she took a wooden crucifix in her hands, and then cried out: 'Yes my Jesus, Thou art mad with love: I repeat it, and I will say it for ever: My Jesus, thou art mad with love.' But no, says St. Denis the Areopagite; 'no, it is not madness, but the ordinary effect of Divine love, which makes him who loves go out of himself, in order to give himself up entirely to the object of his love: Divine love causes ecstasy.'

12. Oh, if men would only pause and consider, looking at Jesus on the cross, the love that He has borne each one of them! 'With what love,' says St. Francis of Sales, 'would not our souls become enkindled at the sight of those flames which are in the Redeemer's breast! And oh, what happiness, to be able to be consumed by that same fire with which our God burns for us! What joy, to be united to God by the chains of love!' St. Buonaventure called the wounds of Jesus Christ, wounds which pierce the most senseless hearts, and which inflame the most icy souls. How many darts of love come forth from those wounds, to wound the hardest hearts! Oh, what flames issue from the burning heart of Jesus Christ to inflame

the coldest souls! And chains, how many, from that wounded side, to bind the most stubborn wills!

13. The Venerable John of Avila, who was so possessed with the love of Jesus Christ that he never failed in any of his sermons to speak of the love which Jesus Christ bears towards us, in a treatise on the love which this most loving Redeemer has for men, has expressed himself in sentiments so full of the fire of devotion, and of such beauty, that I desire to insert them here. He says as follows :

14. 'Thou, O Redeemer, hast loved man in such a manner, that whose reflects upon this love cannot do less than love Thee; for Thy love offers violence to hearts: as the Apostle says: "The charity of Christ presseth us" (2 Cor. v. 14). The source of the love of Jesus Christ for men is His love for God. Hence He said on Maundy Thursday, "That the world may know that I love the Father, arise, let us go hence" (St. John xiv. 31). But whither? To die for men upon the cross.'

15. 'No human intellect can conceive how strongly this fire burns in the heart of Jesus Christ. As He was commanded to suffer death once, so, had He been commanded to die a thousand times, His love had been sufficient to endure it. And if what He suffered for all men had been imposed upon Him for the salvation of one single soul, He would have done the same for each in particular as He did for all. And as He remained three hours upon the cross, so, had it been necessary, His love would have made Him remain there even to the day of judgment. So that Jesus Christ loved much more than He suffered. O divine love, how far greater wert thou than thou outwardly seemedst to be; for though so many wounds and bruises tell us of great love, still they do not tell all its greatness. There was far more within than that which appeared externally. That was but as a spark which bounded forth from the vast ocean of infinite love. This is the greatest mark of love, to lay down our life for our friends. But this was not a sufficient mark for Jesus Christ wherewith to express His love.'

16. 'This is the love which causes holy souls to lose

themselves, and to stand amazed, when once they have been allowed to know it. From it spring those burning sentiments of ardour, the desire of martyrdom, joy in sufferings, exultation under the storms of distress, the force to walk on burning coals as if they were roses, a thirst for sufferings, rejoicing in that which the world dreads, embracing that which it abhors. St. Ambrose says that the soul which is espoused to Jesus Christ upon the cross, thinks nothing so glorious as to bear upon itself the marks of the Crucified One.'

17. 'But how, O my lover, shall I repay this your love! It is right that blood should be compensated by blood. May I behold myself dyed in this blood and nailed to this cross! O holy cross, receive me also! O crown of thorns, enlarge thyself, that I too may place thee on my head! O nails, leave those innocent hands of my Lord, and come and pierce my heart with compassion and with love! For Thou, my Jesus, didst die, as St. Paul says, in order to gain dominion over the living and the dead, not by means of chastisements, but by love; "For to this end Christ died and rose again: that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Rom. xiv. 9).

18. 'O robber of hearts, the strength of Thy love has broken the exceeding hardness of our hearts! Thou hast inflamed the whole world with Thy love. O most loving Lord, inebriate our hearts with this wine, consume them with this fire, pierce them with this dart of Thy love! Thy Cross is, indeed an arrow which pierces hearts. May all the world know that my heart is smitten! O sweetest love, what hast Thou done? Thou hast come to heal me, and Thou hast wounded me. Thou hast come to teach me, and Thou hast made me well nigh mad. O madness full of wisdom, may I never live without you! All, O Lord, that I behold upon the Cross invites me to love Thee: the wood, the figure, the wounds of Thy body; and above all, Thy love, engages me to love Thee, and never to forget Thee more.'

19. But in order to arrive at the perfect love of Jesus Christ, we must adopt the means. Behold then the means which St. Thomas Aquinas gives us.¹ 1. To have a

constant remembrance of the benefits of God, both general and particular. 2. To consider the infinite goodness of God, who is ever waiting to do us good, and who ever loves us, and seeks from us our love. 3. To avoid even the smallest thing that could offend Him. 4. To renounce all the sensible goods of this world, riches, honours, and sensual pleasures. Father Thaulers says that meditation on the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ is a great means also for acquiring His perfect love.

20. Who can deny that, of all devotions, devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ is the most useful, the most tender, the most agreeable to God, one that gives the greatest consolation to sinners, and at the same time most powerfully enkindles loving souls? Whence is it that we receive so many blessings, if it be not from the Passion of Jesus Christ? Whence have we hope of pardon, courage against temptations, confidence that we shall go to heaven? Whence are so many lights to know the truth, so many loving calls, so many spurings to change our life, so many desires to give ourselves up to God, except from the Passion of Jesus Christ? The Apostle therefore had but too great reason to declare him to be excommunicated who did not love Jesus Christ. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (1 Cor. xvi. 22).

21. St. Buonaventure says there is no devotion more fitted for sanctifying a soul than meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ; whence he advises us to meditate every day upon the Passion, if we would advance in the love of God. 'If you would make progress, meditate daily on the Passion of the Lord; for nothing works such an entire sanctification in the soul, as the meditation of the Passion of Christ.' And before him St. Augustine, as Bustis relates, said, that one tear shed in memory of the Passion is worth more than to fast weekly on bread. Wherefore the saints were always occupied in considering the sorrows of Jesus Christ: it was by this means that St. Francis of Assisi became a seraph. He was one day found by a gentleman shedding tears, and crying out with a loud voice: being asked the cause: 'I weep over,' he replied, 'the sorrows and ignominies of my Lord: and what causes me the greatest sorrow is,

that men, for whom He suffered so much, live in forgetfulness of Him.' And on saying this, he wept the more, so that this gentleman began also himself to weep. When the saint heard the bleating of a lamb, or saw any thing which reminded him of the Passion of Jesus, he immediately shed tears. On another occasion, being sick, some one told him to read some pious book: 'My book,' he replied, 'is Jesus crucified.' Hence he did nothing but exhort his brethren to be ever thinking of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Tiepoli writes: 'He who becomes not inflamed with the love of God by looking on Jesus dead upon the Cross, will never love at all.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Eternal Word! Thou hast spent three-and-thirty years in labours and fatigues; Thou hast given Thy life and Thy blood for man's salvation; in short, Thou hast spared nothing to make men love Thee; and how is it possible that there should be those who know this, and yet do not love Thee? O God, amongst these ungrateful ones I also may be numbered! I see the wrong I have done Thee; O my Jesus, have pity upon me! I offer Thee this ungrateful heart—ungrateful it is true, but penitent. Yes, I repent above every other evil, O my dear Redeemer, for having despised Thee! I repent, and I am sorry with my whole heart.

O my soul, love a God who is bound like a criminal for thee; a God scourged like a slave for thee; a God made a mock-king for thee; a God, in short, dead upon a cross, as the vilest outcast for thee! Yes, my Saviour, my God, I love Thee, I love Thee!

Bring continually to my remembrance, I beseech Thee, all that Thou hast suffered for me, so that I may never more forget to love Thee. O cords that bound my Jesus, bind me to Jesus; thorns that crowned my Jesus, pierce me with the love of Jesus; nails that transfixed my Jesus, nail me to the Cross of Jesus, that I may live and die united to Jesus. O Blood of Jesus, inebriate me with His holy love! O death of Jesus, make me die to every earthly affection!

Pierced feet of my Lord, I embrace you, deliver me

from hell, which I have deserved : my Jesus, in hell I could no more love Thee, and yet I desire to love Thee always. Save me, my dearest Saviour ; bind me to Thyself, that I may never again lose Thee. O Mary, refuge of sinners, and Mother of my Saviour ! help a sinner who wishes to love God, and who recommends himself to you : succour me for the love you bear to Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER II.

HOW MUCH JESUS CHRIST DESERVES TO BE LOVED BY US, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LOVE HE HAS SHOWN US IN INSTITUTING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

1. "JESUS, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father : having loved His own . . . He loved them unto the end" (St. John xiii. 1). Our most loving Saviour, knowing that His hour was now come for leaving this earth, desired before He went to die for us, to leave us the greatest possible mark of His love ; and this was the gift of the most Holy Sacrament. St. Bernadine of Sienna remarks, that men remember more continually and love more tenderly the signs of love which are shown to them in the hour of death. Hence it is the custom that friends, when about to die, leave to those persons whom they have loved some gift, such as a garment or a ring, as a memorial of their affection. But what hast Thou, O my Jesus, left us, when quitting this world, in memory of Thy love ? Not, indeed, a garment or a ring, but Thine own Body, Thy Blood, Thy Soul, Thy Divinity, Thy whole Self, without reserve. 'He gave thee all,' says St. John Chrysostom ; 'He left nothing for Himself.'

2. The Council of Trent says,² that in this gift of the Eucharist Jesus Christ desired, as it were, to pour forth all the riches of the love He had for men. And the Apostle observes, that Jesus desired to bestow this gift upon men on the very night itself when they were planning His death : "The same night in which He was betrayed, He

took bread ; and giving thanks, broke and said : Take ye, and eat : this is My body" (1 Cor. xi. 23-24). St. Bernadine of Sienna says, that Jesus Christ, burning with love for us, and not content with being prepared to give His life for us, was constrained by the excess of His love to work a greater work before He died ; and this was to give his own Body for our food.³

3. This Sacrament, therefore, was rightly named by St. Thomas '*the* Sacrament of love, the pledge of love.' Sacrament of love ; for love was the only motive which induced Jesus Christ to give us in it His whole self. Pledge of love ; so that if we had ever doubted His love, we should have in this Sacrament a pledge of it : as if our Redeemer, in leaving us this gift, had said: O souls, if you ever doubt My love, behold I leave you Myself in this Sacrament ; with such a pledge, you can never any more doubt that I love you, and love you to excess. But more, St. Bernard calls this Sacrament '*the love of loves*;' because this gift comprehends all the other gifts bestowed upon us by our Lord,—creation, redemption, predestination to glory ; so that the Eucharist is not only a pledge of the love of Jesus Christ, but of Paradise, which He desires also to give us. '*In which*,' says the Church, '*a pledge of future glory is given us.*' Hence St. Philip Neri could find no other name for Jesus Christ in the Sacrament save that of '*love* : ' and so, when the holy Viaticum was brought to him, he was heard to exclaim, '*Behold my love ; give me my love.*'

4. The prophet Isaias desired that the whole world should know the tender inventions that our God has made use of, wherewith to make men love Him. And who could ever have thought—if He Himself had not done it—that the Incarnate Word would hide Himself under the appearances of bread, in order to become Himself our food ? '*Does it not seem folly*,' says St. Augustine, '*to say, Eat My Flesh ; drink My Blood ?*' When Jesus Christ revealed to His disciples the Sacrament He desired to leave them, they could not bring themselves to believe Him ; and they left Him, saying : "*How can this Man give us His flesh to eat ? This saying is hard, and who can hear it ?*" (St. John vi. 53, 61.) But that which men could neither conceive

nor believe, the great love of Jesus Christ hath thought of and accomplished. "Take ye, and eat," said He to His disciples before He went to die; and through them to us all. Receive and eat: but what food shall that be, O Saviour of the world, which You desire to give us before You die? "Take ye, and eat; this is My body. This is not earthly food; it is I Myself who give Myself entirely to you."

5. And oh, with what desire does Jesus Christ pant to come into our souls in the Holy Communion! "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer" (St. Luke xxii. 15). So He spoke on that night in which He instituted this Sacrament of love. "With desire I have desired:" so did the excessive love which He bore us cause Him to speak, as St. Laurence Justinian remarks: "These are the words of most burning love." And in order that every one might easily receive Him, He desired to leave Himself under the appearance of bread; for if He had left Himself under the appearance of some rare or very costly food, the poor would have been deprived of Him: but no, Jesus would hide Himself under the form of bread, which costs but little, and can be found every where, in order that all in every country might be able to find Him and receive Him.

6. In order, then, to excite us to receive Him in the Holy Communion, He not only exhorts us to do so by so many invitations,—“Come, eat My bread; and drink the wine which I have mingled for you” (Prov. ix. 5); “Eat, O friends, and drink” (Cant. v. 1), speaking of this heavenly bread and wine,—but He even gives us a formal precept: “Take ye, and eat; this is My body.” And more than this; that we may go and receive Him, He entices us with the promise of Paradise. “He that eateth My flesh hath everlasting life” (St. John vi. 55). “He that eateth this bread shall live for ever” (St. John vi. 59). And still more, He threatens us with hell, and exclusion from Paradise, if we refuse to communicate. “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you shall not have life in you” (St. John vi. 54). These invitations, these promises, these threats, all proceed from the great desire He has to come to us in this Sacrament.

7. But why is it that Jesus Christ so desires that we should receive Him in the Holy Communion? Here is the reason. St. Denis says that love always sighs after and tends to union; and so also says St. Thomas, ‘Lovers desire of two to become one.’ Friends who really love each other would like to be so united as to become one person. Now this is what the infinite love of God for man has done; that He would not only give us Himself in the eternal kingdom, but even in this life would permit men to possess Him in the most intimate union, by giving them Himself, whole and entire, under the appearances of bread in the Sacrament. He stands there as though behind a wall; and from thence He beholds, as it were, through a closed lattice: “Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices” (Cant. ii. 9). It is true, we do not see Him; but He sees us, and is there really present: He is present, in order that we may possess Him: but He hides Himself from us to make us desire Him: and as long as we have not reached our true country, Jesus desires to give Himself wholly to us, and to remain united with us.

8. He could not satisfy His love by giving Himself to the human race by His Incarnation and by His passion, dying for all men upon the cross: but He desired to find out a way whereby He might give Himself entirely to each one of us in particular; and for this end He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar, in order to unite Himself wholly to each: “He that eateth My flesh,” He said, “abideth in Me, and I in him” (St. John vi. 57). In the Holy Communion Jesus unites Himself to the soul, and the soul to Jesus; and this is not a union of mere affection, but it is a true and real union. Hence St. Francis of Sales says: ‘In no other action can the Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which He annihilates Himself, so to say, and reduces Himself to food, in order to penetrate our souls, and to unite Himself to the hearts of His faithful.’ St. John Chrysostom says, that Jesus Christ, through the ardent love which He bore us, desired so to unite Himself with us, as to become one and the same thing with us. ‘He mingled Himself with us, that we

might be one thing; for this is the property of those who ardently love.¹⁵

9. 'It was Thy wish, in short,' says St. Laurence Justinian, 'O God, enamoured of our souls, to make, by means of this Sacrament, Thine own heart, by an inseparable union, one and the same heart with ours!' St. Bernadine of Sienna adds, that 'the gift of Jesus Christ to us as our food was the last step of His love; since He gives Himself to us in order to unite Himself wholly with us; in the same way as food becomes united with him who partakes of it.'¹⁶ Oh, how delighted is Jesus Christ to be united with our souls: He one day said to His beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres, after Communion, 'See, my daughter, the beautiful union that exists between Me and thee: come, then, love Me; and let us remain ever united in love, and let us never separate again.'

10. We must, then, be persuaded that a soul can neither do, or think of doing, any thing which gives greater pleasure to Jesus Christ, than to communicate frequently, with dispositions suitable to the great Guest whom she has to receive into her heart. I have said *suitable*, not indeed *worthy* dispositions; for if worthy were necessary, who could ever communicate? Another god would alone be worthy to receive God. By *suitable*, I mean *such* dispositions as become a miserable creature, clothed with the unhappy flesh of Adam. Ordinarily speaking, it is sufficient if a person communicates in a state of grace, and with a great desire of growing in the love of Jesus Christ. St. Francis of Sales said, 'It is by love alone that we must receive Jesus Christ in the Communion, since it is through love alone that He gives Himself to us.' For the rest, with regard to the number of times a person should communicate, in this he should be guided by the advice of his spiritual father. Nevertheless, we should be aware that no state of life or employment, neither the married state nor business, prevents frequent communion, when the director thinks it advisable, as Pope Innocent XI. has declared in his decree of 1679, when he says, 'Frequent communion must be left to the judgment of the confessors . . . who, for lay persons in business, or in the

married state, must recommend it according as they see it will be profitable for their salvation.'

11. We must next understand that there is nothing from which we can derive such profit as from the Communion. The Eternal Father has made Jesus Christ the possessor of all His own heavenly treasures. "The Father hath given all things into His hands" (St. John xiii. 3). Hence, when Jesus Christ comes to a soul in the Holy Communion. He brings with Him boundless treasures of grace; and consequently after Communion we can justly say, "Now all good things came to me together with it" (Wisd. vii.). St. Denis says, that the Sacrament of the Eucharist is far more powerful for the sanctification of souls than all other spiritual means of grace; and St. Vincent Ferrer, that one Communion does more for the soul than a week's fasting on bread and water.

12. In the first place, as the Council of Trent teaches, Communion is that great remedy which frees us from venial, and preserves us against mortal sins. It is said 'from daily faults;' because, according to St. Thomas, a man is excited by means of this Sacrament to make acts of love, by which venial sins are forgiven.⁷ And it is said that 'we are preserved from mortal sins, because communion increases grace, which will preserve us from great faults. Hence Innocent III. says, that Jesus Christ delivered us from the power of sin by His Passion, but that by the Eucharist He delivers us from the power of sinning.

13. This Sacrament, moreover, above all others, inflames our souls with Divine love "God is love" (St. John iv. 8). And He is a fire which consumes all earthly affections in our hearts. "He is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). And for this very purpose, namely, to enkindle this fire, the Son of God came upon earth. "I am come to send fire on the earth;" and He added, that He desired nothing but to see this fire enkindled in our souls: "And what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke xii. 49.) And oh, what flames of love does not Jesus Christ light up in the heart of every one who receives Him devoutly in this Sacrament! St. Catherine of Sienna once saw the Host in a priest's hand appearing as a globe of fire; and the saint was astonished that the hearts

of all men were not burned up, and, as it were, reduced to ashes by such a flame.' Such brilliant rays issued from the face of St. Rose of Lima after communion, as to dazzle the eyes of those who saw her; and the heat from her mouth was so intense, that a hand held near it was scorched. It is related of St. Wenceslaus, that by merely visiting the churches where the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he was inflamed by such an ardour, that his servant who accompanied him did not feel the cold, if when walking on the snow he trod in the footsteps of the saint. And St. John Chrysostom says, that the most Holy Sacrament is a burning fire; so that when we leave the altar, we breathe forth flames of love, which make us objects of terror to hell.

14. The spouse of the Canticles said: "He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me" (Cant. ii. 4). St. Gregory of Nyssa says, that the Communion is precisely this cellar of wine, in which the soul becomes so inebriated with Divine love, that she forgets and loses sight of creatures; and this is that languishing with love of which the spouse again speaks: "Stay me up with flowers: compass me about with apples, because I languish with love" (Cant. ii. 5). Some one will say: 'But this is the very reason why I do not communicate frequently, because I see that I am so cold in the love of God.' Gerson answers such an one by saying: 'Do you, therefore, because you are cold, willingly keep away from the fire? Rather, because you feel yourself cold, should you so much the more frequently approach this Sacrament, if you really desire to love Jesus Christ.' 'Although it be with lukewarmness,' wrote St. Buonaventure, 'still approach, trusting in the mercy of God. The more one feels himself sick, the greater need has he of a physician.'⁸

In like manner, St. Francis of Sales: 'Two sorts of persons ought to go frequently to Communion: the perfect, in order to remain so; and the imperfect, in order to become perfect.'⁹ But for frequent communion, it is at least necessary to have a great desire to become a saint and to grow in the love of Jesus Christ. Our Lord said once to St. Matilda: 'When you go to Communion desire all the

love which a soul has ever had for Me, and I will receive your love according to your desire.’¹⁰

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God of love, O infinite Lover, worthy of infinite love, tell me what more canst Thou invent to make us love Thee? It was not sufficient for Thee to become man, and to subject Thyself to all our miseries; not sufficient to shed all Thy blood for us in torments, and then to die overwhelmed with sorrow, upon a cross destined for the most shameful malefactors. Thou didst, at last, oblige Thyself to be hidden under the species of bread and wine, to become our food, and so united with each one of us. Tell me, I repeat, what more canst Thou invent to make Thyself loved by us? Ah, wretched shall we be, if we do not love Thee in this life! And when we shall have entered into eternity, what remorse shall we not feel for not having loved Thee! My Jesus, I will not die without loving Thee, and loving Thee exceedingly! I am heartily sorry, and am pained for having so greatly offended Thee. But now I love Thee above all things. I love Thee more than myself, and I consecrate to Thee all my affections. Do Thou, who inspirest me with this desire, give me also grace to accomplish it. My Jesus, my Jesus, I desire nothing of Thee but Thyself. Now that Thou hast drawn me to Thy love, I leave all, I renounce all, and I bind myself to Thee: Thou alone art sufficient for me. O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me, and make me a saint! Add this also to the many wonders you have done in changing sinners into saints.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE GREAT CONFIDENCE WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN THE LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US AND IN ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US.

1. DAVID placed all his hope of salvation in his future Redeemer, and said: “Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my

spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth" (Ps. xxx. 6). But how much more ought we to place our confidence in Jesus Christ, now that He has come, and has accomplished the work of redemption! Hence each one of us should say, and repeat again and again with greater confidence: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth."

2. If we have great reason to fear everlasting death on account of our sins against God, we have on the other hand far greater reason to hope for everlasting life through the merits of Jesus Christ, which are infinitely more powerful for our salvation than our sins are for our damnation. We have sinned, and have deserved hell; but the Redeemer has come to take upon Himself all our offences, and to make satisfaction for them by His sufferings: "Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows" (Is. liii. 4).

3. In the same unhappy moment in which we sinned, God had already written against us the sentence of eternal death; but what has our merciful Redeemer done? "Blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was against us . . . the same He took out of the way, fastening it to the cross" (Col. ii. 14). He cancelled by His Blood the decree of our condemnation, and then fastened it to the cross, in order that, when we look at the sentence of our damnation for the sins we have committed, we may at the same time see the cross on which Jesus Christ died and blotted out this sentence by His Blood, and so regain hope of pardon and everlasting life.

4. Oh, how far more powerfully does the Blood of Jesus Christ speak for us, and obtain mercy for us from God, than did the blood of Abel speak against Cain! "You are come to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24). As if the Apostle had said, 'O sinners, happy are you to be able, after you have sinned, to have recourse to Jesus crucified, who has shed all His Blood, in order to become the mediator of peace between sinners and God, and to obtain pardon for them! Your iniquities cry out against you, but the blood of the Redeemer pleads in your favour; and the Divine justice

cannot but be appeased by the voice of this precious Blood.'

5. It is true that we shall have to render a rigorous account to the Eternal Judge of all our sins. But who is to be our Judge? "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son" (St. John v. 22). Let us comfort ourselves, the Eternal Father has committed our judgment to our own Redeemer. Therefore St. Paul encourages us saying: "Who is He that shall condemn? Christ Jesus who died . . . who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 34). Who is the judge to condemn us? It is that same Saviour who, in order not to condemn us to everlasting death, vouchsafed Himself to be condemned and to die; and not content with this, at this moment intercedes with His Father for our salvation. Hence St. Thomas of Villanova says: 'What do you fear, O sinner, if you detest your sin? How will He condemn you, who died in order not to condemn you? how will He cast you from Him, if you return to His feet, He who came from Heaven to seek you at the very time you were flying from Him?'

6. And if we fear on account of our frailty to fall under the assaults of our enemies, against whom we must continually wage war, behold what we have to do, as the Apostle admonishes us: "Let us run to the fight proposed unto us: looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy proposed unto Him, underwent the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 1, 2). Let us go out to the battle with great courage, looking at Jesus crucified, who from His cross offers us His assistance, the victory, and crown. In past times we fell into sin because we left off looking at the wounds and the pains endured by our Redeemer, and so we did not have recourse to Him for help. But if for the future we set before our eyes all He has suffered for love of us, and how He ever stands ready to assist us when we have recourse to Him, it is certain that we shall not be conquered by our enemies. St. Teresa said, with her wonted generosity, 'I do not understand the fears of certain persons, who say, The devil, the devil, so long as we can say, God, God, and make Satan tremble.' On the other hand, the saint assures us, that if we do

not place all our confidence in God, all our own exertions will be of little or no avail. 'All our exertions,' these are her own words, 'are of little use, if we do not give up entirely all trust in ourselves, and place it altogether in God.'

7. Oh, what two great mysteries of hope and love for us are the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Sacrament of the Altar!—mysteries, which we could have never believed, had not faith assured us of them. That God Almighty should deign to become man, shed all His Blood, and die of sorrow upon a cross, and why? To pay for our sins, and gain salvation for us rebellious worms! And then His own very Body, once sacrificed upon the Cross for us, this He vouchsafes to give us for our food, in order to become wholly united with us! O God, how should not these two mysteries consume with love the hearts of all men! And what sinner is there, be he ever so abandoned, who can despair of pardon, if he repent of the evil he has done, when he sees a God so full of love for men, and so inclined to do them good? Hence St. Buonaventure, full of confidence, said, 'I will have great confidence, firmly hoping that He who has done and suffered so much for my salvation will deny me nothing that I have need of.' How can He refuse to give me the graces necessary for my salvation, who has done and suffered so much to save me?

8. "Let us go therefore (the Apostle exhorts us) with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid" (Heb. iv. 16). The throne of grace is the cross on which Jesus sits to dispense graces and mercy to all who come to Him. But we must quickly have recourse to Him, if we would find seasonable aid for our salvation: for there will come a time perhaps when we shall no longer be able to find it. Let us go quickly then and embrace the cross of Jesus Christ and let us go with great confidence. Let us not be frightened by the sight of our miseries; in Jesus crucified we shall find all riches, all grace: "In all things you are made rich in Him . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace" (1 Cor. i. 5, 7). The merits of Jesus

Christ have enriched us with all the divine treasures, and have made us capable of every grace we can desire.

9. St. Leo says, 'that Jesus has brought us by His death more good than the devil has done us harm by sin.'¹¹ And by these words he explains what St. Paul said before him, "that the gift of redemption is greater than sin:" grace has overcome the offence. "Not as the offence, so also is the gift: where sin abounded, grace hath abounded more" (Rom. v. 15, 20). From this the Saviour encourages us to hope for every favour and every grace through His merits. And see how He teaches us the way to obtain all we want from His Eternal Father: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). Whatever you desire, He says, ask for it of the Father in My name, and I promise you that you shall be heard. And indeed how shall the Father be able to deny us, when He has given us His only-begotten Son, whom He loves as Himself? "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). The Apostle says, "all things;" so that no grace is excepted, neither pardon, nor perseverance, nor holy love, nor perfection, nor paradise, 'all, all, He has given us.' But we must pray to Him. God is all liberality to those who call upon Him: "Rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12).

10. I will again quote here many other beautiful thoughts of the Venerable John of Avila, which he has left us in his letters, on the great confidence we should have in the merits of Jesus Christ.

11. 'Do not forget that Jesus Christ is the Mediator between the Eternal Father and ourselves; and that we are beloved by Him, and united to Him by such strong bonds of love, that nothing can break them, so long as a man does not himself dissolve them by some mortal sin. The Blood of Jesus cries out, and asks mercy for us; and cries out so loudly that the noise of our sins is not heard. The death of Jesus Christ hath put to death our sins: "O Death, I will be thy death!" (Hos. xiii. 14.) Those who are lost are not lost for want of means of satisfaction, but

because they would not avail themselves of the Sacraments as the means of profiting by the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ.'

12. 'Jesus has taken upon Himself the affair of remedying our evils, as if it had been personally His own affair. So that He has called our sins His own, although He did not commit them, and has sought pardon for them; and with the most tender love has prayed, as if He were praying for Himself, that all who should have recourse to Him might become objects of love. And as He sought, so He found, because God has so ordained that Jesus and ourselves should be so united in one, that either He and we should be loved, or He and we hated: and since Jesus is not nor cannot be hated, in the same way, if we remain united by love to Jesus, we shall be also loved. By His being loved by God, we are also loved, seeing that Jesus Christ can do more to make us loved than we can do to make ourselves hated; since the Eternal Father loves Jesus Christ far more than He hates sinners.'

13. 'Jesus said to His Father: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me" (St. John xvii. 24). Love has conquered hatred; and thus we have been pardoned and loved, and are secure of never being abandoned, so strong is the tie of love that binds us. The Lord said by Isaias: "Can a woman forget her infant? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven Thee in My hands" (Is. xlix. 15). He has graven us in His hands with His own blood. Thus we should not trouble ourselves about any thing, since every thing is ordained by those hands which were nailed to the cross in testimony of the love He bears us.'

14. 'Nothing can so trouble us on which Jesus Christ cannot reassure us. Let the sins I have committed surround me, let the devils lay snares for me, let fears for the future accuse me, by demanding mercy of the most tender Jesus Christ, who has loved me even until death, I cannot possibly lose confidence; for I see myself so highly valued, that God gave Himself for me. O my Jesus, sure haven for those who seek Thee in time of peril! O most watchful Pastor, he deceives himself who does not trust in Thee, if

only he has the will to amend his life ! Therefore Thou hast said : ' I am here, fear not ; I am He who afflicts and who consoles. Some from time to time I place in desolations, which seem equal to hell itself ; but after a while I bring them out, and console them. I am thine advocate, who have made thy cause My own. I am thy surety, who am come to pay thy debts. I am thy Lord, who have redeemed thee with My Blood, not in order to abandon thee, but to enrich thee, having bought thee at a great price. How shall I fly from him who seeks Me, when I went forth to meet those who sought to outrage Me ? I did not turn away My face from him who struck Me ; and shall I from him who would adore Me ? How can my children doubt that I love them, seeing that out of love to them I placed Myself in the hands of My enemies ? Whom have I ever despised that loved Me ? Whom have I ever abandoned that sought My aid ? Even I go seeking those that do not seek Me.'

15. ' If you believe that the Eternal Father has given you His Son, believe also that He will give you every thing else which is infinitely less than His Son. Do not think that Jesus Christ is forgetful of you, since He has left you, as the greatest memorial and pledge of His love, Himself in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Jesus, my love, what joyful hope does thy Passion give me ! How can I possibly fear not to receive from an Almighty God who has given me all His Blood, the pardon of my sins, paradise, and all other graces that I require ! Ah, my Jesus, my hope and my love, Thou, in order that I might not perish, didst give Thy life ; I love Thee above every good, my Redeemer and my God. Thou gavest Thyself entirely to me ; I give Thee my whole will, and with it I repeat that I love Thee, and I will always say, I love Thee, I love Thee. So I always desire to say in this life, so I wish to die, breathing forth my last sigh with this dear word on my lips, My God, I love Thee ; that from that moment I may commence a love towards Thee which shall

last for ever, and without cessation for all eternity. I love Thee, then ; and because I love Thee, I repent above all things for having offended Thee. In order not to lose a passing satisfaction, I have been willing, wretch that I am, to lose Thee so often, O Infinite Good ! This thought torments me more than any pain : but it is a consolation to me to think that I have to do with infinite goodness, that knows not how to despise a heart that truly loves. Oh, that I could die for Thee, who didst die for me ! My dear Redeemer, I surely hope of Thee eternal salvation in the life to come, and in this life I hope for holy perseverance in Thy love ; and therefore I propose always to ask it of Thee. And do Thou, by the merits of Thy death, give me perseverance in praying to Thee. This too I ask and hope of you, O Mary my Queen !

CHAPTER IV.

HOW MUCH WE ARE OBLIGED TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST.

1. JESUS CHRIST as God has a claim on all our love ; but by the love which He has shown us, He wished to put us, so to speak, under the necessity of loving Him, at least in gratitude for all that He has done and suffered for us. He has greatly loved us, that we might love Him greatly. ‘Why does God love us, but that He may be loved?’ wrote St. Bernard. And Moses had said the same before him : “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God . . . and love Him?” (Deut. x. 12). Therefore the first command which He gave us was this : “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart” (Deut. vi. 5).

And St. Paul says, that love is the fulfilling of the law : “Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. xv. 10). For ‘fulfilling’ the Greek text has the ‘embracing of the law,’ love embraces the entire law. And who, indeed, at the sight of a crucified God dying for our love can refuse to love Him?

Those thorns, those nails, that cross, those wounds, and that blood, call upon us, and irresistibly urge us, to love Him who has loved us so much. One heart is too little wherewith to love this God so enamoured of us. In order to requite the love of Jesus Christ, it would require another God to die for His love. ‘Ah, why,’ exclaims St. Francis of Sales, ‘do we not throw ourselves on Jesus Christ, to die on the cross with Him who was pleased to die there for the love of us?’ The Apostle clearly impresses on us that Jesus Christ died for us for this end, that we might no longer live for ourselves, but solely for that God who died for us: “Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them” (2 Cor. v. 15).

3. And the recommendation of Ecclesiasticus is here in point: “Forget not the kindness of thy surety; for he hath given his life for thee” (Ecclus. xxix. 19). Be not unmindful of Him who has stood surety for thee; who, to satisfy for thy sins, was willing to pay off, by His death, the debt of punishment due from thee. Oh, how desirous is Jesus Christ that we should continually remember His Passion! and how it saddens Him to see that we are so unmindful of it! Should a person endure for one of his friends affronts, blows, and imprisonment, how afflicting would it be for him to know that that friend afterwards never gave it a thought, and cared not even to hear it spoken of! On the contrary, how gratified would he be to know that his friend constantly spoke of it with the warmest gratitude, and often thanked him for it. So it is pleasing to Jesus Christ when we preserve in our minds a grateful and loving recollection of the sorrows and death which He underwent for us. Jesus Christ was the desire of all the ancient fathers; He was the desire of all nations before He was yet come upon earth. Now, how much more ought He to be our only desire and our only love, now that we know that He is really come, and are aware how much He has done and suffered for us,—so that He even died upon the cross for love of us!

4. For this purpose He instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on the day preceding His death, and gave

us the injunction, that as often as we should be nourished with His most sacred flesh, we should be mindful of His death: "Take ye, and eat; this is My body. . . . This do for a commemoration of Me," &c. "For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come" (1 Cor. xi. 24, 26). Wherefore the holy Church prays: 'O God! who under this wonderful Sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion,' &c. And she also sings: 'O sacred banquet, in which Christ is taken, the memory of His Passion is renewed,' &c. Hence we may gather how pleasing to Jesus Christ are they who think frequently of His Passion, since it was for this very purpose that He left Himself in the holy Sacrament upon our altars, in order that we might bear in continual and grateful remembrance all that He suffered for us, and by this means evermore increase our love towards Him. St. Francis of Sales called Mount Calvary 'the mountain of lovers.' It is impossible to remember that mount and not love Jesus Christ, who died there for love of us.

5. O God! and how is it that men do not love this God who has done so much to be loved by men! Before the Incarnation of the Word, man might have doubted whether God loved him with a true love; but after the coming of the Son of God, and after His dying for the love of men, how can we possibly doubt of His love? 'O man,' says St. Thomas of Villanova, 'look on that cross, on those torments, and that cruel death, which Jesus Christ has suffered for thee: after so great and so many tokens of His love, thou canst no longer entertain a doubt that He loves thee, and loves thee exceedingly.' And St. Bernard says, that 'the cross and every wound of our Blessed Redeemer cry aloud to make us understand the love He bears us.'

6. In this grand mystery of man's redemption, we must consider how Jesus employed all His thoughts and zeal to discover every means of making Himself loved by us. Had He merely wished to die for our salvation, it would have been sufficient had He been slain by Herod with the other children; but no, He chose before dying to lead, during thirty-three years, a life of hardship and suffering; and

during that time, with a view to win our love, He appeared in several different guises. First of all, as a poor child born in a stable; then as a little boy helping in the workshop; and finally, as a criminal executed on a cross. But before dying on the cross, we see Him in many different states, one and all calculated to excite our compassion, and to make Himself loved: in agony in the garden, bathed from head to foot in a sweat of blood; afterwards, in the court of Pilate, torn with scourges; then treated as a mock king, with a reed in His hand, a ragged garment of purple on His shoulders, and a crown of thorns on His head; then dragged publicly through the streets to death, with the cross upon His shoulders; and at length, on the hill of Calvary, suspended on the cross by three iron nails. Tell me, does He merit our love or not, this God who has vouchsafed to endure all these torments, and to use so many means in order to captivate our love? Father John Rigouleux used to say: 'I would spend my life in weeping for love of a God whose love induced Him to die for the salvation of men.'

7. 'Love is a great thing,' says St. Bernard. A great thing, a precious thing is love. Solomon, speaking of the Divine wisdom, which is holy charity, called it an infinite treasure; because he that possesses charity is made partaker of the friendship of God: "For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God" (Wisd. vii. 14). The angelic doctor, St. Thomas, says, that charity is not only the queen of all virtues, but that wherever she reigns, she draws along with her, as it were, in her train, all other virtues, and directs them all so as to bring us in closer union with God: but charity is properly that which unites us with God.¹² As St. Bernard tells us: 'Charity is a virtue uniting us with God.' And, indeed, it is over and over again signified in the holy Scriptures, that God loves whoever loves Him: "I love them that love Me" (Prov. viii. 17). "If any one loves Me . . . My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him" (St. John xiv. 23). "He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). Behold the beautiful union which charity

produces; it unites the soul with God. Moreover, love supplies strength to practise and to suffer every thing for God: "Love is strong as death" (Cant. viii. 6). St. Augustine writes: 'Nothing is so hard that cannot be subdued by the fire of love.' Wherefore the saint says, that where we love, either the labour is not felt, or if felt, the labour itself is loved: 'In that which is loved, either there is no labour, or the labour is loved.'

8. Let us hear from St. John Chrysostom what are the effects of Divine love in those souls in which it reigns: 'When the love of God has taken possession of a soul, it produces an insatiable desire to work for the beloved; in-somuch that however many and however vast the works which she does, and however prolonged the duration of her service, all seems nothing in her eyes, and she is afflicted at doing so little for God; and were it permitted her to die and consume herself for Him, she would be most happy. Hence it is that she esteems herself an unprofitable servant in all that she does; because she is instructed by love to know what God deserves, and sees by this clear light all the defects of her actions, and finds in them motives for confusion and pain, well aware how mean is all she can do for so great a Lord.'

9. 'Oh! how those persons delude themselves,' says St. Francis of Sales, 'who place virtue in any thing else but in loving God! Some,' writes the saint, 'put perfection in austerities, others in alms, others in prayer, others in frequenting the holy Sacraments. For my part, I know of no other perfection than that of loving God with our whole heart; because all the other virtues, without love, are but a mere heap of stones. And if we do not perfectly enjoy this holy love, the fault lies with us, because we do not, once for all, come to the conclusion of giving up ourselves wholly to God.'

10. Our Lord said one day to St. Teresa, 'Every thing which does not give pleasure to Me is vanity.' Would that all understood well this great truth! 'For the rest, one thing is necessary.' It is not necessary to be rich in this world, to gain the esteem of others, to lead a life of ease, to enjoy dignities, to have a reputation for learning;

it is only necessary to love God and to do His will. For this single end has He created us, for this He preserves our life ; and thus only can we gain admittance into Paradise. " Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm" (Cant. viii. 6). The Lord thus speaks to all His espoused souls. Put Me as a seal upon thy heart and upon thine arm, in order that all thy desires and actions may tend to Me ; upon thy heart, that no other love but Mine may enter there ; upon thine arm, in order that all thou dost may have Me for its sole object. Oh, how quickly does that soul speed onwards to perfection, which in all her actions regards but Jesus crucified, and has no other pretension than to gratify Him !

11. To acquire, then, a true love of Jesus Christ should be our only care. The masters of spiritual life describe the marks of true love. Love, say they, is *fearful*, and its fear is none other than that of displeasing God. It is *generous*, because, trusting in God, it is never daunted even at the greatest enterprises for His glory. It is *strong*, because it subdues all its evil appetites, even in the midst of the most violent temptations, and of the darkest desolations. It is *obedient*, because it immediately flies to execute the Divine will. It is *pure*, because it loves God alone, and for the sole reason that He deserves to be loved. It is *ardent*, because it would inflame all mankind, and willingly see them consumed with Divine love. It is *inebriating*, for it causes the soul to live as it were out of herself, as if she no longer saw, nor felt, nor had any more senses left for earthly things, bent wholly on loving God. It is *unitive*, by producing a strict union between the will of the creature and the will of the Creator. It is *longing*, for it fills the soul with desires of leaving this world, to fly and unite herself perfectly with God in her true and happy country, where she may love Him with all her strength.

12. But no one teaches us so well the real characteristics and practice of charity as the great preacher of charity, St. Paul. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, he says, in the first place, that without charity man is nothing, and that nothing profits him : " If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I

am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii.). So that even should a person have faith strong enough to remove mountains, like St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, but had not charity, it would profit him nothing. Should he give all his goods to the poor, and even willingly suffer martyrdom, but remain void of charity, — should he do it, that is, for any other end than that of pleasing God, it would profit him nothing at all. Then St. Paul gives us the marks of true charity, and at the same time teaches us the practice of those virtues which are the daughters of charity; and he goes on to say: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up, is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. xiii.). Let us therefore, in the present book, proceed to consider these holy practices, that we may thus see if the love which we owe to Jesus Christ truly reigns within us; as likewise that we may understand in what virtues we should chiefly exercise ourselves, in order to persevere and advance in this holy love.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O most lovely and most loving Heart of Jesus, miserable is the heart which does not love Thee! O God, for the love of men Thou didst die on the cross, helpless and forsaken, and how then can men live so forgetful of Thee? O love of God! O ingratitude of man! O men, O men! do but cast one look on the innocent Son of God, agonising on the cross, and dying for you, in order to satisfy the Divine justice for your sins, and by this means to allure you to love Him. Observe how, at the same time, He prays His Eternal Father to forgive you. Behold Him, and love Him. Ah, my Jesus, how small is the number of those that love Thee! Wretched too am I; for I also have lived so many years unmindful of Thee, and have grievously offended Thee, my beloved Redeemer! It is

not so much the punishment I have deserved that makes me weep, as the love which Thou hast borne me. O sorrows of Jesus ! O ignominies of Jesus ! O wounds of Jesus ! O death of Jesus ! O love of Jesus ! rest deeply engraved in my heart, and may your sweet recollection be for ever fixed there, to wound me and inflame me continually with love. I love Thee, my Jesus ; I love Thee, my Sovereign Good ; I love Thee, my Love and my all ; I love Thee, and I will love Thee for ever. Oh, suffer me never more to forsake Thee, never more to lose Thee ! Make me entirely Thine ; do so by the merits of Thy death. In this I firmly trust. And I have a great confidence also in your intercession, O Mary, my Queen ; make me love Jesus Christ, and make me also love you, my Mother and my hope !

CHAPTER V.

CHARITY IS PATIENT.

The soul that loves Jesus Christ loves to suffer.

1. THIS earth is the place for meriting, and therefore it is a place for suffering. Our true country, where God has prepared for us repose in everlasting joy, is Paradise. We have but a short time to stay in this world ; but in this short time we have many labours to undergo : “ Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries ” (Job xiv. 1). We must suffer, and all must suffer : be they just, or be they sinners, each one must carry his cross. He that carries it with patience is saved ; he that carries it with impatience is lost. St. Augustine says, the same miseries send some to Paradise and some to hell : ‘ One and the same blow lifts the good to glory, and reduces the bad to ashes.’ The same saint observes, that by the test of suffering the chaff in the Church of God is distinguished from the wheat : he that humbles himself under tribulations, and is resigned to the will of God, is wheat for Paradise ; he that grows haughty and is enraged, and so forsakes God, is chaff for hell.

2. On the day when the cause of our salvation shall be decided, our life must be found conformable to the life of Jesus Christ, if we would enjoy the happy sentence of the predestined: "For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). This was the end for which the Eternal Word descended upon earth, to teach us, by His example, to carry with patience the cross which God sends us: "Christ suffered for us (wrote St. Peter), leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). So that Jesus Christ suffered on purpose to encourage us to suffer. O God! what a life was that of Jesus Christ! a life of ignominy and pain. The Prophet calls our Redeemer "despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows" (Is. liii. 3). A man held in contempt, and treated as the lowest, the vilest among men, a man of sorrows; yes, for the life of Jesus Christ was made up of hardships and afflictions.

3. Now, in the same manner as God has treated His beloved Son, so does He treat every one whom He loves, and whom He receives for His son: "For whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth; and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. xii. 6). For this reason He one day said to St. Teresa: 'Know that the souls dearest to My Father are those who are afflicted with the greatest sufferings.' Hence the saint said of all her troubles, that she would not exchange them for all the treasures in the world. She appeared after her death to a soul, and revealed to her that she enjoyed an immense reward in heaven, not so much for her good works, as for the sufferings which she cheerfully bore in this life for the love of God; and that if she could possibly entertain a wish to return upon earth, the only reason would be in order that she might suffer more for God.

4. He that loves God in suffering earns a double reward in Paradise. St. Vincent of Paul said, that it was a great misfortune to be free from suffering in this life. And he added, that a congregation or an individual that does not suffer, and is applauded by all the world, is not far from a fall. It was on this account that St. Francis of

Assisi, on the day that he had suffered nothing for God, became afraid lest God had forgotten him. St. John Chrysostom says, that when God endows a man with the grace of suffering, He gives him a greater grace than that of raising the dead to life ; because in performing miracles man remains God's debtor ; whereas in suffering, God makes Himself the debtor of man. And he adds, that whoever endures something for God, even had he no other gift than the strength to suffer for the God whom he loves, this would procure for him an immense reward. Wherefore he affirmed, that he considered St. Paul to have received a greater grace in being bound in chains for Jesus Christ, than in being rapt to the third heaven in ecstasy.

5. "But patience has a perfect work" (James i. 4). The meaning of this is, that nothing is more pleasing to God than to see a soul suffering with patience all the crosses sent her by Him. The effect of love is to liken the lover to the person loved. St. Francis of Sales said, 'All the wounds of Christ are so many mouths, which preach to us that we must suffer for Him. The science of the saints is to suffer constantly for Jesus ; and in this way we shall soon become saints.' A person that loves Jesus Christ is anxious to be treated like Jesus Christ,—poor, persecuted, and despised. St. John beheld all the saints clothed in white, and with palms in their hands : "Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Apoc. vii. 9). The palm is the symbol of martyrs, and yet all the saints did not suffer martyrdom ;—why, then, do all the saints bear palms in their hands ? St. Gregory replies, that all the saints have been martyrs either of the sword or of patience ; so that, he adds, 'we can be martyrs without the sword, if we keep patience.'

6. The merit of a soul that loves Jesus Christ consists in loving and in suffering. Hear what our Lord said to St. Teresa : 'Think you, My child, that merit consists in enjoyment ? No ; it consists in suffering and in loving. Look at My life, wholly embittered with afflictions. Be assured, My child, that the more My Father loves any one, the more sufferings He sends him ; they are the standard of His love. Look at My wounds ; your torments will

never reach so far. It is absurd to suppose that My Father favours with His friendship those who are strangers to suffering.' And for our consolation St. Teresa makes this remark : 'God never sends a trial, but He forthwith rewards it with some favour.' One day Jesus Christ appeared to the blessed Baptista Varani, and told her of three special favours which He is wont to bestow on cherished souls : the first is, not to sin ; the second, which is greater, to perform good works ; the third, and the greatest of all, to suffer for His love. So that St. Teresa used to say, whenever any one does something for God, the Almighty repays him with some trial. And therefore the saints, on receiving tribulations, thanked God for them. St. Lewis of France, referring to his captivity in Turkey, said : 'I rejoice, and thank God more for the patience which He accorded me in the time of my imprisonment, than if He had made me master of the universe.' And when St. Elizabeth, princess of Thuringia, after her husband's death, was banished with her son from the kingdom, and found herself homeless and abandoned by all, she went to a convent of the Franciscans, and there had the *Te Deum* sung in thanksgiving to God for the signal favour of being allowed to suffer for His love.

7. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say : 'All suffering is slight to gain heaven.' And the Apostle had already said the same : "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 8). It would be a great gain for us to endure all the torments of all the martyrs during our whole lives, in order to enjoy one single moment of the bliss of Paradise ; with what readiness, then, should we embrace our crosses, when we know that the sufferings of this transitory life will gain for us an everlasting beatitude ! "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). St. Agapitus, while still a mere boy in years, was threatened by the tyrant to have his head covered with a red-hot helmet ; on which he replied, 'And what better fortune could possibly befall me, than to lose

my head here, to have it crowned hereafter in Heaven ?
This made St. Francis exclaim :

‘ I look for such a meed of bliss,
That all my pains seem happiness.’

But whoever desires the crown of Paradise must needs combat and suffer : “ If we suffer, we shall also reign” (2 Tim. ii. 12). We cannot get a reward without merit ; and no merit is to be had without patience : “ He is not crowned, except he strive lawfully” (2 Tim ii. 5). And the person that strives with the greatest patience shall have the greatest reward. Wonderful indeed ! When the temporal goods of this world are in question, worldlings endeavour to procure as much as they can ; but when it is a question of the goods of eternal life, they say, ‘ It is enough if we get a little corner in heaven !’ Such is not the language of the saints ; they are satisfied with any thing whatever in this life, nay more, they strip themselves of all earthly goods ; but concerning eternal goods, they strive to obtain them in as large a measure as possible. I would ask, whether of the two act with more wisdom and prudence ?

8. But even with regard to the present life, it is certain that he who suffers with most patience enjoys the greatest peace. It was a saying of St. Philip Neri, that in this world there is no Purgatory ; it is either all Paradise or all hell : he that patiently supports tribulations enjoys a Paradise ; he that does not do so, suffers a hell. Yes, for (as St. Teresa writes) he that embraces the crosses sent him by God feels them not. St. Francis of Sales, finding himself on one occasion beset on every side with tribulations, said, ‘ For some time back the severe oppositions and secret contrarieties which have befallen me afford me so sweet a peace, that nothing can equal it ; and they give me such an assurance that my soul will ere long be firmly united with God, that I can say with all truth that they are the sole ambition, the sole desire of my heart.’ And indeed peace can never be found by one who leads an irregular life, but only by him who lives in union with God

and with His blessed will. A certain missionary of a religious order, while in the Indies, was one day standing to witness the execution of a person under sentence of death, and already on the scaffold: the criminal called the missionary to him, and said, 'You must know, Father, that I was once a member of your order; whilst I observed the rules I led a very happy life; but when, afterwards, I began to relax in the strict observance of them, I immediately experienced pain in every thing; so much so, that I abandoned the religious life, and gave myself up to vice, which has finally reduced me to the melancholy pass in which you at present behold me.' And in conclusion he said, 'I tell you this, that my example may be a warning to others.' The venerable Father Lewis da Ponte said, 'Take the sweet things of this life for bitter, and the bitter for sweet; and so you will be in the constant enjoyment of peace. Yes, for though the sweet are pleasant to sense, they invariably leave behind them the bitterness of remorse of conscience, on account of the imperfect satisfaction which, for the most part, they afford; but the bitter, when taken with patience from the hand of God, become sweet, and dear to the souls who love Him.'

9. Let us be convinced that in this valley of tears true peace of heart cannot be found, except by him who endures and lovingly embraces sufferings to please Almighty God: this is the consequence of that corruption in which all are placed through the infection of sin. The condition of the saints on earth is to suffer and to love; the condition of the saints in Heaven is to enjoy and to love. Father Paul Segneri the younger, in a letter which he wrote one of his penitents to encourage her to suffer, gave her the counsel to keep these words inscribed at the foot of her crucifix: 'Tis thus one loves.' It is not simply by suffering, but by desiring to suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, that a soul gives the surest signs of really loving Him. And what greater acquisition (said St. Teresa) can we possibly make than to have some token of gratifying Almighty God? Alas, how ready are the greatest part of men to take alarm at the bare mention of crosses, of humiliations and afflictions! Nevertheless there are many souls who

find all their delight in suffering, and who would be quite disconsolate did they pass their time on this earth without suffering. The sight of Jesus crucified (said a devout person) renders the cross so lovely to me, that it seems to me I could never be happy without suffering; the love of Jesus Christ is sufficient for me for all. Listen how Jesus advises every one who would follow Him to take up and carry his cross: "Let him take up his cross, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23). But we must take it up and carry it, not by constraint and against our will, but with humility, patience, and love.

10. Oh, how acceptable to God is he that humbly and patiently embraces the crosses which He sends him! St. Ignatius of Loyola said, 'There is no wood so apt to enkindle and maintain love towards God as the wood of the cross;' that is, to love Him in the midst of sufferings. One day St. Gertrude asked our Lord what she could offer Him most acceptable, and He replied, 'My child, thou canst do nothing more gratifying to Me than to submit patiently to all the tribulations that befall thee.' Wherefore the great servant of God Sister Victoria Angelini affirmed, that one day of crucifixion was worth a hundred years of all other spiritual exercises. And the venerable Father John of Avila said, 'One 'blessed be God' in contrarieties is worth more than a thousand thanksgivings in prosperity.' Alas, how little men know of the inestimable value of afflictions endured for God! The Blessed Angela of Foligno said, 'that if we knew the just value of suffering for God, it would become an object of plunder;' which is as much as to say, that each one would seek an opportunity of robbing his neighbour of the occasions of suffering. For this reason St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, well aware as she was of the merit of sufferings, sighed to have her life prolonged rather than to die and go to Heaven, 'because,' said she, 'in Heaven one can suffer no more.'

11. A soul that loves God has no other end in view but to be wholly united with Him; but let us learn from St. Catherine of Genoa what is necessary to be done to arrive at this perfect union: 'To attain union with God, adversities are indispensable; because by them God aims at

destroying all our corrupt propensities within and without. And hence all injuries, contempts, infirmities, abandonment of relations and friends, confusions, temptations, and other mortifications, all are in the highest degree necessary for us, in order that we may carry on the fight, until by repeated victories we come to extinguish within us all vicious movements, so that they are no longer felt; and we shall never arrive at Divine union until adversities, instead of seeming bitter to us, become all sweet for God's sake.'

12. It follows, then, that a soul that sincerely desires to belong to God must be resolved, as St. John of the Cross writes, not to seek enjoyments in this life, but to suffer in all things; she must embrace with eagerness all voluntary mortifications, and with still greater eagerness those which are involuntary, since they are the more welcome to Almighty God: 'The patient man is better than the valiant.' God is pleased with a person who practises mortification by fasting, *cilices*, and disciplines, on account of the courage displayed in such mortifications; but He is much more pleased with those who have the courage to bear patiently and gladly such crosses as come from His own Divine Hand. St. Francis of Sales said, 'Such mortifications as come to us from the hand of God, or from men by His permission, are always more precious than those which are the offspring of our own will; for it is a general rule, that wherever there is less of our own choice, God is better pleased, and we ourselves derive greater profit.' St. Teresa taught the same thing: 'We gain more in one day by the oppositions which come to us from God or our neighbour than by ten years of mortifications of self-infliction.' Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi made the generous declaration, that there could not be found in the whole world an affliction so severe, but what she would gladly bear with the thought that it came from God; and, in fact, during the five years of severe trial which the saint underwent, it was enough to restore peace to her soul to remember that it was by the will of God that she so suffered. Ah, God, that infinite treasure is cheaply purchased at any cost! Father Hippolytus Durazzo used to say, 'Purchase God at what cost you will, He can never be dear.'

13. Let us then beseech God to make us worthy of His love; for if we did but once perfectly love Him, all the goods of this earth would seem to us but as smoke and dirt, and we should relish ignominies and afflictions as delights. Let us hear what St. John Chrysostom says of a soul wholly given up to Almighty God: 'He who has attained the perfect love of God seems to be alone on the earth,—he no longer cares either for glory or ignominy,—he scorns temptations and afflictions,—he loses all relish and appetite for created things. And as nothing in this world brings him any support or repose, he goes incessantly in search of his Beloved without ever feeling wearied; so that when he toils, when he eats, when he is watching, or when sleeping, in every action and word, all his thoughts and desires are fixed upon finding his Beloved, because his heart is where his treasure is.' In this chapter we have spoken of patience in general; in chapter xiv. we shall treat more particularly of things in which we have especially to practise patience.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My dear and beloved Jesus, my Treasure, I have deserved by my offences never more to be allowed to love Thee; but by Thy merits, I entreat Thee, make me worthy of Thy pure love. I love Thee above all things; and I repent with my whole heart of having ever despised Thee, and driven Thee from my soul; but now I love Thee more than myself; I love Thee with all my heart, O Infinite Good! I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I have not a wish besides that of loving Thee perfectly; nor have I a fear besides that of ever seeing myself deprived of Thy love. O my most loving Redeemer, enable me to know how great a good Thou art, and how great is the love Thou hast borne me in order to oblige me to love Thee! Ah, my God, suffer me not to live any longer unmindful of so much goodness! Enough have I offended Thee, I will never leave Thee again; I wish to employ all the remainder of my days in loving Thee, and in pleasing Thee. My Jesus, my Love, lend me Thine aid; help a sinner who wishes to love Thee and to be wholly Thine own. O Mary,

my hope, your Son hears you ; pray to Him in my behalf, and get me the grace of loving Him perfectly !

CHAPTER VI.

CHARITY IS KIND.

He that loves Jesus Christ loves meekness.

1. THE spirit of meekness is peculiar to God: "My spirit is sweet above honey" (Ecclus. xxiv. 27). Hence it is that a soul that loves God loves also all those whom God loves, namely, her neighbours; so that she eagerly seeks every occasion of helping all, of consoling all, and of making all happy as far as she can. St. Francis of Sales, who was the master and model of holy meekness, says, 'Humble meekness is the virtue of virtues, which God has so much recommended to us; therefore we should endeavour to practise it always and in all things.' Hence the saint gives us this rule: 'What you see can be done with love, do it; and what you see cannot be done without offence, leave it undone.' He means, when it can be omitted without offending God; because an offence of God must always, and as quickly as possible, be prevented by him who is bound to prevent it.

2. This meekness should be particularly observed towards the poor, who, by reason of their poverty, are often harshly treated by men. It should likewise be especially practised towards the sick who are suffering under infirmities, and for the most part meet with small help from others. Meekness is more especially to be observed in our behaviour towards enemies: "Overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 21). Hatred must be overcome by love, and persecution by meekness; thus the saints acted, and so they conciliated the affections of their most exasperated enemies.

3. 'There is nothing,' says St. Francis of Sales, 'that gives so much edification to our neighbour as meekness of behaviour.' The saint, therefore, was generally seen smiling, and with a countenance beaming with charity,

which gave a tone to all his words and actions. This gave occasion to St. Vincent of Paul to declare, that he never knew a kinder man in his life. He said further, that it seemed to him that in this his lordship of Sales was a true likeness of Jesus Christ. Even in refusing what he could not in conscience comply with, he did so with such sweetness, that all, though unsuccessful in their requests, went away satisfied and well-disposed towards him. He was gentle towards all, towards superiors, towards equals and inferiors, at home and abroad; in contrast with some, who, as the saint used to say, 'seemed angels abroad, but were devils at home.' Moreover, the saint, in his conduct towards servants, never complained of their remissness; at most he would give them an admonition, but always in the gentlest terms. And this is a thing most praiseworthy in superiors. The superior should use all kindness towards those under him. When telling them what they have to do, he should rather request than command. St. Vincent of Paul said: 'A superior will never find a better means of being readily obeyed than meekness.' And to the same effect was the saying of St. Jane Frances of Chantal: 'I have tried various methods of governing, but I have not found any better than that of meekness and forbearance.'

4. And more than this, the superior should be kind even in the correction of faults. It is one thing to correct with firmness, and another with harshness; it is needful at times to correct with firmness, when the fault is serious, and especially if it be repeated after the subject has already been admonished of it; but let us always be on our guard against harsh and angry correction; he that corrects with anger does more harm than good. This is that bitter zeal reproved by St. James. Some make a boast of keeping their family in order by severity, and they say it is the only successful method of treatment; but St. James speaks not so: "But if you have bitter zeal . . . glory not" (James iii. 14). If on some rare occasion it be necessary to speak a cross word, in order to bring the offender to a proper sense of his fault, yet in the end we ought invariably to leave him with a gentle countenance and a word of kindness. Wounds must be healed after the fashion of the

good Samaritan in the Gospel, with wine and oil: 'But as oil,' said St. Francis of Sales, 'always swims on the surface of all other liquids, so must meekness prevail over all our actions.' And when it occurs that the person under correction is agitated, then the reprehension must be deferred till his anger has subsided, or else we should only increase his indignation. The Canon Regular St. John said: 'When the house is on fire, one must not cast wood into the flames.'

5. "You know not of what spirit you are" (Luke ix. 55). Such were the words of Jesus Christ to His disciples James and John, when they would have brought down chastisements on the Samaritans for expelling them from their country. Ah, said the Lord to them, and what spirit is this? this is not My spirit, which is sweet and gentle; for I am come not to destroy but to save souls: "The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save" (Luke ix. 56). And would you induce Me to destroy them? Oh, hush! and never make the like request to Me, for such is not according to My spirit. And, in fact, with what meekness did Jesus Christ treat the adulteress! "Woman," said He, "hath no man condemned thee? Neither will I condemn thee! Go, and now sin no more" (John viii. 10, 11). He was satisfied with merely warning her not to sin again, and sent her away in peace. With what meekness, again, did He seek the conversion of the Samaritan woman, and so, in fact, converted her! He first asked her to give Him to drink; then He said to her: "If thou didst know who He is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink!" and then He revealed to her that He was the expected Messiah. And, again, with what meekness did He strive to convert the impious Judas, admitting him to eat of the same dish with Him, washing his feet and admonishing him in the very act of His betrayal: Judas, and dost thou thus betray Me with a kiss? "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke xxii. 48.) And see how He converted Peter after his denial of Him! "And the Lord turning, looked on Peter" (Luke xxii. 61). On leaving the house of the high-priest, without making him a single reproach, He cast on him a look of tenderness, and thus converted

him ; and so effectually did He convert him, that during his whole life long Peter never ceased to bewail the injury he had done to his Master.

6. Oh, how much more is to be gained by meekness than by harshness ! St. Francis of Sales said there was nothing more bitter than the bitter almond ; but if made into a preserve, it becomes sweet and agreeable : thus corrections, though in their nature very unpleasant, are rendered pleasant by love and meekness, and so are attended with more beneficial results. St. Vincent of Paul said of himself, that in the government of his own congregation he had never corrected any one with severity, except on three occasions, when he supposed there was reason to do so ; but that he regretted it ever afterwards, because he found it turned out badly ; whereas he had always admirably succeeded by gentle correction.

7. St. Francis of Sales obtained from others whatever he wished by his meek behaviour ; and by this means he managed to gain the most hardened sinners to God. It was the same with St. Vincent of Paul, who taught his disciples this maxim : ‘ Affability, love, and humility have a wonderful efficacy in winning the hearts of men, and in prevailing on them to undertake things most repugnant to nature.’ He once gave a great sinner to the care of one of his fathers, to bring him to sentiments of true repentance ; but that father, in spite of all his endeavours, found his labour fruitless ; so that he begged the saint to speak a word to him. The saint accordingly spoke with him, and converted him. That sinner subsequently declared that the singular sweetness of Father Vincent had worked upon his heart. Wherefore it was that the saint could not bear his missionaries to treat sinners with severity ; and he told them that the infernal spirit took advantage of the strictness of some to work the greater ruin of souls.

8. Kindness should be observed towards all on all occasions and at all times. St. Bernard remarks, that certain persons are gentle as long as things fall out to their taste ; but scarcely do they experience some opposition or contradiction, than they are instantly on fire, like Mount Vesuvius itself. Such as these may be called burning coals, but

hidden under the embers. Whoever would become a saint, must, during this life, resemble the lily among thorns, which, however much it may be pricked by them, never ceases to be a lily; that is, it is always equally sweet and serene. The soul that loves God maintains an imperturbable peace of heart; and she shows this in her very countenance, being ever mistress of herself, alike in prosperity and adversity, according to the lines of Cardinal Petrucci:

‘Of outward things he views the varying guise,
While in his soul’s most inmost depth
Undimmed God’s image lies.’

9. Adversity brings out a person’s real character. St. Francis of Sales very tenderly loved the Order of the Visitation, which had cost him so much labour. He saw it several times in imminent danger of dissolution, on account of the persecutions it underwent; but the saint never for a moment lost his peace, and was ready, if such was the will of God, to see it entirely destroyed; and then it was that he said: ‘For some time back the trying oppositions and secret contrarieties which have befallen me, afford me so sweet a peace, that nothing can equal it; and they give me such an earnest of the immediate union of my soul with God, that, in truth, they form the sole desire of my heart.’

10. Whenever it happens that we have to reply to ~~some~~ one who insults us, let us be careful to answer with meekness: “A mild answer breaketh wrath” (Prov. xv. 1). A mild reply is enough to quench ~~every~~ spark of anger. And in case we feel irritated, it is best to keep silence, because then it seems only just to give vent to all that rises to our lips; but when our passion has subsided, we shall see that all our words were full of faults.

11. And when it happens that we ourselves commit some fault, we must also practise meekness in our own regard: to be exasperated at ourselves after a fault is not humility, but a subtle pride, as if we were any thing else but the weak and miserable things that we are. St. Teresa said: ‘the humility that disturbs does not come from God, but from the devil. To be angry at ourselves after the commission of a fault is a fault worse than the one com-

mitted, and will be the occasion of many other faults : it will make us leave off our devotions, prayers, and communions ; or if we do practise them, they will be done very badly. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that we cannot see in troubled waters, and that the devil fishes in them. A soul that is troubled knows little of God and of what she ought to do. Whenever, therefore, we fall into any fault, we should turn to God with humility and confidence, and craving His forgiveness, say to Him, with St. Catherine of Genoa : ‘ O Lord, this is the produce of my own garden ! I love Thee with my whole heart, and I repent of the displeasure I have given Thee ! I will never do the like again, grant me Thy assistance !’

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O blessed chains that bind the soul with God, oh, enfold me still closer, and in links so firm that I may never be able to loosen myself from the love of my God ! My Jesus, I love Thee ; O Treasure, O Life of my soul, to Thee I cling, and I give myself wholly unto Thee ! No indeed, my beloved Lord, I wish never more to cease from loving Thee. Thou who, to atone for my sins, didst allow Thyself to be bound as a criminal, and so bound to be led to death through the streets of Jerusalem,—Thou who consentedst to be nailed to the cross, and didst not leave it until life itself had left Thee, oh, suffer me not ever to be separated from Thee again ; I regret above every other evil, to have at one time turned my back upon Thee, and henceforth I purpose by Thy grace to die rather than to give Thee the slightest displeasure. O my Jesus, I abandon myself to Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart ; I love Thee more than myself. I have offended Thee in times past ; but now I bitterly repent of it, and I would willingly die of grief. Oh, draw me entirely to Thyself ! I renounce all sensible consolations ; I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more. Make me love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt. O Mary, my hope, bind me to Jesus ; and grant me to live and die in union with Him, in order to come one day to the happy kingdom, where I shall have no more **fear** of ever being separated from His love !

CHAPTER VII.

CHARITY ENVIETH NOT.

The soul that loves Jesus Christ does not envy the great ones of this world, but only those who are greater lovers of Jesus Christ.

1. ST. GREGORY explains this next characteristic of charity in saying, that as charity despises all earthly greatness, it cannot possibly provoke her envy. ‘She envieth not, because as she desireth nothing in this world, she cannot envy earthly prosperity.’¹³ Hence we must distinguish two kinds of envy, one evil and the other holy. The evil kind is that which envies and repines at the worldly goods possessed by others on this earth. But holy envy, so far from wishing to be like, rather compassionates the great ones of the world, who live in the midst of honours and earthly pleasures. She seeks and desires God alone, and has no other aim besides that of loving Him as much as she can ; and therefore she has a pious envy of those who love Him more than she does, for she would, if possible, surpass the very seraphim in loving Him.

2. This is the sole end which pious souls have in view on earth, an end which so charms and ravishes the heart of God with love, that it causes Him to say : “Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister ; My spouse, thou hast wounded My heart with one of thy eyes” (Cant. iv. 9). By ‘one of thy eyes’ is meant that one end which the espoused soul has in all her devotions and thoughts, namely, to please Almighty God. Men of the world look on things with many eyes, that is, have several inordinate views in their actions ; as, for instance, to please others, to become honoured, to obtain riches, and if nothing else, at least to please themselves ; but the saints have but a single eye, with which they keep in view, in all that they do, the sole pleasure of God ; and with David they say : “What have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth ?” (Ps. lxxii. 25, 26.) What do I wish, O my God, in this world or in the next, save Thee alone ? Thou art my riches, Thou art the only Lord of my heart.

‘Let the rich,’ said St. Paulinus, ‘enjoy their riches, let the kings enjoy their kingdoms, Thou, O Christ, art my treasure and my kingdom!’

3. And here we must remark, that we must not only perform good works, but we must perform them well. In order that our works may be good and perfect, they must be done with the sole end of pleasing God. This was the admirable praise bestowed on Jesus Christ: “He hath done all things well” (Mark vii. 37). Many actions may in themselves be praiseworthy, but from being performed for some other purpose than for the glory of God, they are often of little or no value in His sight. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, ‘God rewards our actions by the weight of pure intention’ As much as to say, that according as our intention is pure, so does the Lord accept of and reward our actions. But, O God, how difficult it is to find an action done solely for Thee! I remember a holy old man, a religious, who had laboured much in the service of God, and died in the reputation of sanctity; now one day, as he cast a glance back at his past life, he said to me in a tone of sadness and fear, ‘Wo is me! when I consider all the actions of my past life, I do not find one done entirely for God.’ Oh, this accursed self-love, that makes us lose all or the greater part of the fruit of our good actions! How many in their most holy employments, as of preaching, hearing confessions, giving missions, labour and exert themselves very much, and gain little or nothing because they do not regard God alone, but worldly honour, or self-interest, or the vanity of making an appearance, or at least their own inclination!

4. Our Lord has said, “Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. vi. 1). He that works for his own gratification already receives his wages: “Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward” (Matt. vi. 5). But a reward, indeed, which dwindles into a little smoke, or the pleasure of a day that quickly vanishes, and confers no benefit on the soul. The Prophet Aggeus says, that whoever labours for any thing else but to please God, puts his reward in a sack

full of holes, which, when he comes to open, he finds entirely empty : "And he that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with holes" (Agg. i. 6). And hence it is that such persons, in the event of their not gaining the object for which they entered on some undertaking, are thrown into great trouble. This is a sign that they had not in view the glory of God alone : he that undertakes a thing solely for the glory of God, is not troubled at all, though his undertaking may fail of success ; for, in truth, by working with a pure intention, he has already gained his object, which was to please Almighty God.

5. The following are the signs which indicate whether we work solely for God in any spiritual undertaking. 1. If we are not disturbed at the failure of our plans, because when we see it is not God's will, neither is it any longer our will. 2. If we rejoice at the good done by others, as heartily as if we ourselves had done it. 3. If we have no preference for one charge more than another, but willingly accept that which obedience to superiors enjoins us. 4. If after our actions we do not seek the thanks or approbation of others, nor are in any way affected if we be found fault with or scolded, being satisfied with having pleased God. And if when the world applauds us we are not puffed up, but meet the vain-glory, which might make itself felt, with the reply of the vénéralble John of Avila : 'Get away, thou comest too late, for all has been already given to God.'

6. This is to enter into the joy of the Lord ; that is, to enjoy the enjoyment of God, as is promised to His faithful servants : "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 23). And if it falls to our lot to do something pleasing to God, what more, asks St. John Chrysostom, can we desire ? 'If thou art found worthy to perform something that pleases God, dost thou seek other recompense than this ? The greatest reward, the brightest fortune that can befall a creature, is to give pleasure to his Creator.

7. And this is what Jesus Christ looks for from a soul that loves Him : "Put me," He says, "as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm" (Cant. viii. 6). He desires

us to place Him as a seal on our heart and on our arm : on our heart, in order that whatever we intend doing, we may intend solely for the love of God ; on our arm, in order that whatever we do, all may be done to please God ; so that God may be always the sole end of all our thoughts and of all our actions. St. Teresa said, that he who would become a saint must live free from every other desire than that of pleasing God ; and her first daughter, the Venerable Beatrice of the Incarnation, said, ‘ No sum whatever could repay the slightest thing done for God.’ And with reason , for all things done to please God are acts of charity which unite us with God, and obtain for us everlasting rewards.

8. Purity of intention is called the heavenly alchemy by which iron is turned into gold ; that is to say, the most trivial actions (such as to work, to take one’s meals, to take recreation or repose), when done for God, become the gold of holy love. Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi believes for certain that those who do all with a pure intention, go straight to Paradise, without passing through Purgatory. It is related (in the *Spiritual Treasury*) that it was the custom of a pious hermit, before setting about any work, to pause a little, and lift his eyes to heaven ; on being questioned why he did so, he replied, ‘ I am taking my aim.’ By which he meant, that as the archer, before shooting his arrow, takes his aim, that he may not miss the mark, so before each action he made God his aim, in order that it might be sure of pleasing Him. We should do the same ; and even during the performance of our actions, it is very good for us from time to time to renew our good intention.

9. Those who have nothing else in view in their undertakings than the Divine will, enjoy that holy liberty of spirit which belongs to the children of God ; and this enables them to embrace every thing that pleases Jesus Christ, however revolting it may be to their own self-love or human respect. The love of Jesus Christ establishes His lovers in a state of total indifference ; so that all is the same to them, be it sweet or bitter ; they desire nothing for their own pleasure, but all for the pleasure of God. With the same feelings of peace, they address themselves to

small and great works ; to the pleasant and the unpleasant : it is enough for them, if they please God.

10. Maury, on the other hand, are willing to serve God, but it must be in such an employment, in such a place, with such companions, or under such circumstances, or else they either quit the work, or do it with an ill-will. Such persons have not freedom of spirit, but are slaves of self-love ; and on that account gain very little merit by what they do : they lead a troubled life, because the yoke of Jesus Christ becomes a burden to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ care only to do what pleases Him ; and for the reason that it pleases Him, when He wills, and where He wills, and in the manner He wills : and whether He wishes to employ them in a state of life honoured by the world, or in a life of obscurity and insignificance. This is what is meant by loving Jesus Christ with a pure love ; and in this we ought to exercise ourselves, battling against the craving of our self-love, which would urge us to seek important and honourable functions, and such as suit our inclinations.

11. We must, moreover, be detached from all exercises, even spiritual ones, when the Lord wishes us to be occupied in other works of His good pleasure. One day, Father Alvarez, finding himself surrounded with business, was anxious to get rid of it, in order to go and pray, because it seemed to him that during that time he was not with God ; but our Lord then said to him : ‘ Though I do not keep thee with Me, let it suffice thee that I make use of thee.’ This is a profitable lesson for those who are sometimes disturbed at being obliged, by obedience or by charity, to leave their accustomed devotions ; let them be assured that such disturbances on like occasions do not come from God, but either from the devil or from self-love. ‘ Give pleasure to God, and die.’ This is the grand maxim of the saints.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Eternal God, I offer Thee my whole heart ; but what sort of heart, O God, is it that I offer Thee ? A heart,

created, indeed to love Thee; but which, instead of loving Thee, has so many times rebelled against Thee. But behold, my Jesus, if there was a time when my heart rebelled against Thee, now it is deeply grieved and penitent for the displeasure it has given Thee. Yes, my dear Redeemer, I am sorry for having despised Thee; and I am determined to do all to obey Thee, and to love Thee at every cost. Oh, draw me wholly to Thy love; do this for the sake of the love which made Thee die for me on the cross. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee with all my soul; I love Thee more than myself, O true and only lover of my soul; for I find none but Thee who have sacrificed their life for me. I weep to think that I have been so ungrateful to Thee. Unhappy that I am! I was already lost; but I trust that by Thy grace Thou hast restored me to life. And this shall be my life, to love Thee always, my Sovereign Good. Make me love Thee, O Infinite Love, and I ask Thee for nothing more! O Mary my mother, accept of me for your servant, and gain acceptance for me with Jesus your Son.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARITY DEALETH NOT PERVERSELY.

He that loves Jesus Christ avoids lukewarmness, and seeks perfection; the means of which are: 1. Desire; 2. Resolution; 3. Mental Prayer; 4. Communion; 5. Prayer.

1. ST. GREGORY, in his explanation of these words, 'dealeth not perversely,' says, that charity, giving herself up more and more to the love of God, ignores whatever is not right and holy.¹⁴ The Apostle had already written to the same effect, when he calls charity a bond that unites the most perfect virtues together in the soul. "Have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. iii. 14). And whereas charity delights in perfection, she consequently abhors that lukewarmness with which some persons serve God, to the great risk of losing charity, Divine grace their very soul, and their all.

2. At the same time, it must be observed that there are two kinds of tepidity or lukewarmness: the one unavoidable, the other avoidable. From that which is unavoidable, the saints themselves are not exempt; and this comprises all the failings which are committed by us without full consent, but merely from our natural frailty. Such are, for example, distractions at prayers, interior disquietudes, useless words, vain curiosity, the wish to appear, tastes in eating and drinking, the movements of concupiscence not instantly repressed, and such like. We ought to avoid these defects as much as we possibly can; but, owing to the weakness of our nature, caused by the infection of sin, it is impossible to avoid them altogether. We ought, indeed, to detest them after committing them, because they are displeasing to God; but, as we remarked in the preceding chapter, we ought to beware of making them a subject of alarm or disquietude. St. Francis of Sales wrote as follows: 'All such thoughts as create disquietude are not from God, who is the Prince of Peace; but they proceed always from the devil, or from self-love, or from the good opinion which we have of ourselves.'

3. Such thoughts, therefore, as disturb us, must be straightway rejected, and made no account of. It was said also by the same saint, with regard to indeliberate faults, that as they were involuntarily committed, so are they cancelled involuntarily. An act of sorrow, an act of love, is sufficient to cancel them. The venerable Sister Mary Crucified, a Benedictine nun, saw once a globe of fire, on which a number of straws were cast, and were all forthwith reduced to ashes. She was given to understand by this figure, that one act of Divine love, made with fervour, destroys all the defects which we may have in our soul. The same effect is produced by the holy Communion; according to what we find in the Council of Trent, where the Eucharist is called 'an antidote by which we are freed from daily faults.' Thus the like faults, though they are indeed faults, do not hinder perfection; that is, our advancing to perfection; because, in the present life, no one attains perfection before he arrives at the kingdom of the blessed.

4. The tepidity, then, that does hinder perfection, is that tepidity which is avoidable when a person commits deliberate venial faults; because all these faults committed with open eyes can effectually be avoided by the Divine grace, even in the present life. Wherefore St. Teresa said: 'May God deliver you from deliberate sin, however small it may be.' Such, for example, are wilful untruths, little detractions, imprecations, expressions of anger, derisions of one's neighbour, cutting words, speeches of self-esteem, animosities nourished in the heart, inordinate attachments to persons of a different sex. 'These are a sort of worm' (wrote the same saint) 'which is not detected before it has eaten into the virtues.' Hence, in another place, the saint gave this admonition: 'By means of small things the devil goes about making holes for great things to enter.'

5. We should, therefore, tremble at such deliberate faults; since they cause God to close His hands from bestowing upon us His clearer lights and stronger helps, and they deprive us of spiritual sweetnesss; and the result of them is to make the soul perform all spiritual exercises with great weariness and pain; and so, in course of time, she begins to leave off prayer, communions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and novenas; and, in fine, she will probably leave off all, as has not unfrequently been the case with many unhappy souls.

6. This is the meaning of that threat which our Lord makes to the tepid: "Thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm . . . I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth" (Apoc. iii. 15, 16). How wonderful! He says, "I would thou wert cold!" What! and is it better to be cold, that is, deprived of grace, than to be tepid? Yes, in a certain sense it is better to be cold; because a person who is cold may more easily change his life, being stung by the reproaches of conscience; whereas a tepid person contracts the habit of slumbering on in his faults, without bestowing a thought, or taking any trouble to correct himself; and thus he makes his cure, as it were, desperate: St. Gregory says, 'Tepidity, which has cooled down from fervour, is a hopeless state.' The Ven. Father Lewis da

Ponte said that he had committed many defects in the course of his life; but that he never had made a truce with his faults. Some there are who shake hands with their faults, and from that springs their ruin; especially when the fault is accompanied with some passionate attachment of self-esteem, of ambition, of liking to be seen, of heaping up money, of resentment against a neighbour, or of inordinate affection for a person of different sex. In such cases there is great danger of those hairs, as it were, becoming chains, as St. Francis of Assisi said, which will drag down the soul to hell. At all events, such a soul will never become a saint, and will forfeit that beautiful crown, which God had prepared for her, had she faithfully corresponded to grace. The bird no sooner feels herself loosed from the snare, than she immediately flies; the soul, as soon as she is loosed from earthly attachments, immediately flies to God; but while she is bound, though it be but by the slightest thread, it is enough to prevent her flying to God. Oh, how many spiritual persons there are who do not become saints, because they will not do themselves the violence to break away from certain little attachments!

7. All the evil arises from the little love they have for Jesus Christ. Those who are puffed up with self-esteem; those who frequently take to heart occurrences that fall out contrary to their wishes; who practise great indulgence towards themselves on account of their health; who keep their heart open to external objects, and the mind always distracted, with an eagerness to listen to, and to know, so many things that have nothing to do with the service of God, but merely serve to gratify private curiosity; who are ready to resent every little inattention from others, and consequently are often troubled, and grow remiss in prayer and recollection; one moment they are all devotion and joy, the next all impatience and melancholy, just as things happen, according to or against their humour; all such persons do not love Jesus Christ, or love Him very little, and cast discredit on true devotion.

8. But suppose any one should find himself sunk in this unhappy state of tepidity, what has he to do? Certainly, it is a hard thing for a soul grown lukewarm to

resume her ancient fervour ; but our Lord has said, that what man cannot do, God can very well do. "The things that are impossible with man, are possible with God" (Luke xviii. 27). Whoever prays and employs the means is sure to accomplish his desire. The means to cast off tepidity, and to tread in the path of perfection, are five in number : 1. The desire of perfection ; 2. The resolution to attain it ; 3. Mental prayer ; 4. Frequenting the holy Communion ; 5. Prayer.

9. The first means, then, is the desire of perfection. Pious desires are the wings which lift us up from earth ; for, as St. Laurence Justinian says, desire 'supplies strength, and renders pain more light:' on the one hand it gives strength to walk towards perfection, and on the other hand it lightens the fatigue of the journey. He who has a real desire of perfection fails not to advance continually towards it ; and so advancing, he must finally arrive at it. On the contrary, he who has not the desire of perfection will always go backwards, and always find himself more imperfect than before. St. Augustine says, that 'not to go forwards in the way of God is to go backwards.' He that makes no efforts to advance will find himself carried backwards by the current of his corrupt nature.

10. They, then, who say 'God does not wish us all to be saints' make a great mistake. Yes ; for St. Paul says, "This is the Will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess iv. 3). God wishes all to be saints, and each one according to his state of life : the religious as a religious ; the secular as a secular ; the priest as a priest ; the married as married ; the man of business as a man of business ; the soldier as a soldier ; and so of every other state of life. Most beautiful, indeed, are the instructions which my great patroness St. Teresa gives on this subject. She says, in one place, 'Let us enlarge our thoughts ; for hence we shall derive immense good.' Elsewhere she says : 'We must beware of having poor desires ; but rather put our confidence in God, in order that, by forcing ourselves continually onwards, we may by degrees arrive where, by the Divine grace, so many saints have arrived.' And in confirmation of

this she quoted her own experience, having known how courageous souls make considerable progress in a short period of time. 'Because,' said she, 'The Lord takes as much delight in our desires, as if they were put into execution.' In another place she says: 'Almighty God does not confer extraordinary favours, except where His love has been earnestly sought after.' Again, in another passage, she remarks: 'God does not fail to repay every good desire even in this life, for He is the friend of generous souls, provided only they do not trust in themselves.' This saint herself was endowed with just such a spirit of generosity; so that she once even said to our Lord, that were she to behold others in Paradise enjoying Him more than herself, she should not care; but were she to behold any one loving Him more than she should love Him, this she declared she knew not how she could endure.

11. We must, therefore, have a great courage: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him" (Lam. iii. 25). God is surpassingly good and liberal towards a soul that heartily seeks Him. Neither can past sins prove a hindrance to our becoming saints, if we only have the sincere desire to become so. St. Teresa remarks: 'The devil strives to make us think it pride to entertain lofty desires, and to wish to imitate the saints; but it is of great service to encourage ourselves with the desire of great things, because, although the soul has not all at once the necessary strength, yet she nevertheless makes a bold flight, and rapidly advances.' The Apostle writes: "To them that love God, all things work together unto good" (Rom. viii. 28). And the gloss adds 'even sins,' even past sins can contribute to our sanctification, inasmuch as the recollection of them keeps us more humble, and more grateful, when we witness the favours which God lavishes upon us, after all our outrages against Him. I am capable of nothing (the sinner should say), nor do I deserve any thing; I deserve nothing but hell; but I have to deal with a God of infinite bounty, who has promised to listen to all that pray to Him. Now, as He has rescued me from a state of damnation, and wishes me to become holy, and now proffers me His help, I can certainly become a saint,

not by my own strength, but by the grace of my God, who strengthens me: "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 3). When, therefore, we have once good desires, we must take courage, and trusting in God, endeavour to put them into execution; but if afterwards we encounter any obstacle in our spiritual enterprises, let us repose quietly on the will of God. God's will must be preferred before every good desire of our own. St Mary Magdalene of Pazzi would sooner have remained void of all perfection than possess it without the will of God.

12. The second means of perfection is the resolution to belong wholly to God. Many are called to perfection; they are urged on towards it by grace, they conceive a desire of it; but because they never really resolve to acquire it, they live and die in the ill-odour of their tepid and imperfect life. The desire of perfection is not enough, if it be not followed up by a stern resolve to attain it. How many souls feed themselves on desires alone, but never make withal one step in the way of God! It is of such desires that the wise man speaks when he says: "Desires kill the slothful" (Prov. xxi 25). The slothful man is ever desiring, but never resolves to take the means suitable to his state of life to become a saint. He says: 'Oh, if I were but in solitude, and not in this house! Oh, if I could but go and reside in another monastery, I would give myself entirely up to God!' And meanwhile he cannot support a certain companion; he cannot put up with a word of contradiction; he is dissipated about many useless cares; he commits a thousand faults of gluttony, of curiosity, and of pride; and yet he sighs out to the wind: 'Oh, if I had but!' or 'Oh, if I could but!' &c. Such desires do more harm than good; because some regale themselves upon them, and in the meantime go on leading a life of imperfection. It was a saying of St. Francis of Sales: 'I do not approve of a person who, being engaged in some duty or vocation, stops to sigh for some other kind of life than is compatible with his actual position, or for other exercises unfitted for his present state; for it merely serves to dissipate his heart, and makes him languish in his necessary duties.'

13. We must, therefore, desire perfection, and resolutely take the means towards it. St. Teresa says : ' God only looks for one resolution on our part, and will afterwards do all the rest Himself : the devil has no fear of irresolute souls.' For this reason mental prayer must be used, in order to take the means which lead to perfection. Some make much prayer, but never come to a practical conclusion. The same saint said : ' I would rather have a short prayer, which produces great fruits, than a prayer of many years, wherein a soul never gets further than resolving to do something worthy of Almighty God.' And elsewhere she says : ' I have learnt by experience that whoever, at the beginning, brings himself to the resolution of doing some great work, however difficult it may be, if he does so to please God, he has no reason to be afraid.'

14. The first resolution must be to make every effort, and to die rather than commit any deliberate sin whatever, however small it may be. It is true that all our endeavours, without the Divine assistance, cannot enable us to vanquish temptations ; but God wishes us on our part frequently to use this violence with ourselves, because then He will afterwards supply us with His grace, will succour our weakness, and enable us to gain the victory. This resolution removes from us every obstacle to our going forward, and at the same time gives us great courage, because it affords us an assurance of being in the grace of God. St. Francis of Sales writes : ' The best security we can possess in this world of being in the grace of God, consists not indeed in feeling that we have His love, but in a pure and irrevocable abandonment of our entire being into His hands, and in the firm resolution of never consenting to any sin, either great or small.' This is what is meant by being of a delicate conscience. Be it observed, that it is one thing to be of a delicate conscience, and another to be of a scrupulous conscience. To be of a delicate conscience is requisite to become a saint ; but to be scrupulous is a defect, and does harm ; and on this account we must obey our directors, and rise above scruples, which are nothing else but vain and unreasonable alarms.

15. Hence it is necessary to resolve on choosing the

best, not only what is agreeable to God, but what is most agreeable to Him, without any reserve. St. Francis of Sales says: 'We must start with a strong and constant resolution to give ourselves wholly to God, and protest to Him that for the future we wish to be His without any reserve, and then we must afterwards often renew this same resolution.' St. Andrew Avellini made a vow to advance daily in perfection. It is not necessary for every one who wishes to become a saint to make it the matter of a vow; but he must endeavour every day to make some steps forward in perfection. St. Laurence Justinian has written: 'When a person is really making way, he feels in himself a continual desire of advancing; and the more he improves in perfection, the more this desire increases; because as his interior light increases each day more and more, he seems to himself always to be wanting in every virtue, and to be doing no good at all; and if, perchance, he is aware of some good he does, it always appears to him very imperfect, and he makes small account of it. The consequence is, he is continually labouring to acquire perfection without ever feeling wearied.'

16. And we must begin quickly, and not wait for the morrow. Who knows whether we shall afterwards find time or not! Ecclesiastes counsels us: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly" (Eccl. ix. 10). What thou canst do, do it quickly, and defer it not; and he adduces the reason why: "For neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." Because in the next life there is no more time to work, nor free-will to merit, nor prudence to do well, nor wisdom or experience to take good counsel by, for after death what is done is done. A nun of the convent of Torre de Specchi in Rome, whose name was Sister Bonaventura, led a very lukewarm sort of life. There came a religious, Father Lancisius, to give the spiritual exercises to the nuns, and Sister Bonaventura, feeling no inclination to shake off her tepidity, began to listen to the exercises with no good will. But at the very first sermon she was won by Divine grace, so that she immediately went to the feet of the father who preached.

and said to him, with a tone of real determination, 'Father, I wish to become a saint, and quickly a saint.' And, by the assistance of God, she did so; for she only lived eight months after that event, and during that short time she lived and died a saint.

17. David said: "And I said, now have I begun" (Ps. lxxvi. 11). So likewise exclaimed St. Charles Borromeo: 'To-day I begin to serve God.' And we should act in the same way as if we had hitherto done no good whatever; for, indeed, all that we do for God is nothing, since we are bound to do it. Let us therefore each day resolve to begin afresh to belong wholly to God. Neither let us stop to observe what or how others do. They who become truly saints are few. St. Bernard says: 'One cannot be perfect without being singular.' If we would imitate the common run of men, we should always remain imperfect, as for the most part they are. We must overcome all, renounce all, in order to gain all. St. Teresa said: 'Because we do not come to the conclusion of giving all our affection to God, so neither does He give all His love to us.' Oh, God, how little is all that is given to Jesus Christ, who has given His Blood and His Life for us! 'However much we give,' says the same saint, 'is but dirt, in comparison of one single drop of Blood shed for us by our Blessed Lord.' The saints know not how to spare themselves, when there is a question of pleasing a God who gave Himself wholly, without reserve, on purpose to oblige us to deny Him nothing. St. Chrysostom wrote: 'He gave all to thee, and kept nothing for Himself.' God has bestowed His entire Self upon thee; there is, then, no excuse for thee to behave reservedly with God. He has even died for us all, says the Apostle, in order that each one of us may live only for Him who died for us: "Christ died for all; that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them" (2 Cor. v. 15).

18. The third means of becoming a saint is *mental prayer*. John Gerson writes: 'That he who does not meditate on the eternal truths cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian. The reason is, because without mental prayer light fails us, and we walk in the dark.

The truths of faith are not seen by the eyes of the body, but by the eyes of the mind, when we meditate; he that fails to meditate on them, fails to see them, and therefore walks in the dark; and being in the dark, he easily grows attached to sensible things, for the sake of which he then comes to despise the eternal.' St. Teresa wrote as follows to the Bishop of Osma: 'Although we seem to discover in ourselves no imperfections; yet, when God opens the eyes of the soul, which He is wont to do in prayer, then they plainly appear.' And St. Bernard had before said, that he who does not meditate 'does not abhor himself, merely because he does not know himself.' 'Prayer,' says the saint, 'regulates the affections, directs the actions,' keeps the affections of the soul in order, and directs all our actions to God; but without prayer the affections become attached to the earth, the actions conform themselves to the affections, and in this manner all runs into disorder.

19. We read of an awful example of this in the life of the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified of Sicily. Whilst this servant of God was praying, she heard a devil making a boast that he had succeeded in withdrawing a religious from the community-prayer; and she saw in spirit, that after this omission the devil tempted her to consent to a grievous sin, and that she was on the point of yielding. She forthwith accosted her, and by a timely admonition prevented her falling. St. Teresa said, that whoever leaves off prayer 'very shortly becomes either a brute beast or a devil.'

20. He therefore that leaves off prayer, will leave off loving Jesus Christ. Prayer is the blessed furnace where the fire of holy love is enkindled and kept alive: "And in my meditation a fire shall flame out" (Ps. xxxviii. 4). It was said by St. Catherine of Bologna: 'The person that foregoes the practice of prayer, cuts that string which binds the soul to God.' It follows that the devil, finding the soul cold in Divine love, will have little difficulty in inducing her to partake of some poisonous fruit or other. St. Teresa said, on the contrary, 'Whosoever perseveres in prayer, let him hold for a certainty, that with however many sins the devil may surround him, the Lord will

eventually bring him into the haven of salvation.' In another place she says, 'Whoever halts not in the way of prayer arrives sooner or later.' And elsewhere she writes, 'that it is on this account that the devil labours so hard to withdraw souls from prayer, because he well knows that he has missed gaining those who faithfully persevere in prayer.' Oh, how great are the benefits that flow from prayer! In prayer we conceive holy thoughts, we practise devout affections, we excite great desires, and form efficacious resolutions to give ourselves wholly to God; and thus the soul is led for His sake to sacrifice earthly pleasures and all disorderly appetites. It was said by St. Aloysius Gonzaga: 'There will never be much perfection without much prayer.' Let him who longs for perfection mark well this notable saying of the saint.

21. We should not go to prayer in order to taste the sweetness of Divine love; whoever prays from such a motive will lose his time, or at least derive little advantage from it. A person should begin to pray solely to please God, that is, solely to earn what the will of God is in his regard, and to beg of Him the help to put it in practice. The Venerable Father Antony Torres said: 'To carry the cross without consolation makes souls fly to perfection. Prayer unattended with sensible consolations confers greater fruit on the soul. But pitiable is the poor soul that leaves off prayer, because she finds no relish in it' St. Teresa said: 'When a soul leaves off prayer, it is as if she cast herself into hell without any need of devils.'

22. It results too, from the practice of prayer, that a person constantly thinks of God. 'The true lover' (says St. Teresa) 'is ever mindful of the beloved one. And hence it follows, that persons of prayer are always speaking of God, knowing, as they do, how pleasing it is to God that His lovers should delight in conversing about Him, and on the love He bears them, and that thus they should endeavour to enkindle it in others.' The same saint wrote: 'Jesus Christ is always found present at the conversations of the servants of God, and He is very much gratified to be the subject of their delight.'

23 Prayer, again, creates that desire of retiring into

solitude, in order to converse alone with God, and to maintain interior recollection in the discharge of necessary external duties ; I say *necessary*, such as the management of one's family, or of the performance of duties required of us by obedience ; because a person of prayer must love solitude, and avoid dissipation in superfluous and useless affairs, otherwise he will lose the spirit of recollection, which is a great means of preserving union with God : " My sister, my spouse is a garden enclosed" (Cant. iv. 12). The soul espoused to Jesus Christ must be a garden closed against all creatures, and must not admit into her heart other thoughts, nor other business, but those of God or for God. Hearts thrown open never become saints. The saints, who have to labour in gaining souls to God, do not lose their recollection in the midst of all their labours, either of preaching, confessing, reconciling enemies, or assisting the sick. The same rule holds good with those who have to apply to study. How many from excessive study, and a desire to become learned, become neither holy nor learned, because true learning consists in the science of the saints ; that is to say, in knowing how to love Jesus Christ ; whereas, on the contrary, Divine love brings with it knowledge and every good : " All good things came to me together with her" (Wisd. vii. 11), that is, with holy charity. The Venerable John Berchmans had an extraordinary love for study, but by his great virtue he never allowed study to interfere with his spiritual interests. The Apostle exhorts us : " Not to be more wise than it becometh to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety" (Rom. xiii. 3). A priest especially must have knowledge : he must know things, because he has to instruct others in the Divine law : " For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth" (Mal. ii. 7). He must have knowledge, " but unto sobriety." He that leaves prayer for study shows that in his study he seeks himself, and not God. He that seeks God leaves study (if it be not absolutely necessary), in order not to omit prayer.

24. Besides, the greatest evil is, that without mental prayer we do not pray at all. I have spoken frequently in

my spiritual works of the necessity of prayer, and more especially in a little volume entitled, *On Prayer, the great Means, &c.* ; and in the present chapter also I will briefly say a few other things. It will be sufficient then to quote here the opinion of the Venerable Palafox, Bishop of Osma: 'How can charity last, unless God grants us perseverance? How will the Lord grant us perseverance, unless we ask it of Him? And how shall we ask it of Him except by prayer? Without prayer there is no communication with God for the preservation of virtue.' And so it is, because he that neglects mental prayer sees very little into the wants of his soul, he knows little of the dangers of his salvation, of the means to be used in order to overcome temptations; and so, understanding little of the necessity of prayer, he leaves off praying, and will certainly be lost.

25. Then as regards subjects for meditation, nothing is more useful than to meditate on the four last things—death, judgment, hell, and heaven; but it is of especial advantage to meditate on death, and to imagine ourselves expiring on the bed of sickness, with the crucifix in our hands, and on the point of entering into eternity. But above all, to one that loves Jesus Christ, and is anxious always to increase in His love, no consideration is more efficacious than that of the Passion of the Redeemer. St. Francis of Sales calls 'Mount Calvary the Mountain of Lovers.' All the lovers of Jesus Christ love to abide on this mountain, where no air is breathed but the air of Divine love. When we see a God dying for our love, and dying in order to gain our love ("He loved us, and delivered Himself up for us"), it is impossible not to love Him ardently. Such darts of love continually issue forth from the wounds of Christ crucified as pierce even hearts of stone. Oh happy is he who is ever going during this life to the heights of Calvary! O blessed Mount! O lovely Mount! O beloved Mount! and who shall ever leave thee more! A Mount that sends forth flames to enkindle the souls that perseveringly abide upon thee!

26. The fourth means of perfection, and even of perseverance in the grace of God, is frequently to receive the Holy Communion, of which we have already spoken in the

second chapter, where we affirmed that a soul can do nothing more pleasing to Jesus Christ than to receive Him often in the Sacrament of the Altar. St. Teresa said : ' There is no better help to perfection than frequent communion : oh, how admirably does the Lord bring ou such a soul to perfection ! ' And she adds, that, ordinarily speaking, they who communicate most frequently are found further advanced in perfection ; and that there is greater spirituality in those communities where frequent communion is the custom. For this reason it is that, as we find declared in a decree of Innocent XI., in 1679, the holy Fathers have so highly extolled, and so much promoted, the practice of frequent and even of daily communion. The Holy Communion, as the Council of Trent tells us, delivers us from daily faults, and preserves us from mortal ones. St. Bernard asserts that communion represses the movements of anger and incontinence, which are the two passions that most frequently and most violently assail us. St. Thomas says, that communion defeats the suggestions of the devil.¹⁵ And finally, St. John Chrysostom says, that communion pours into our souls a great inclination to virtue, and a promptitude to practise it ; and at the same time imparts to us a great peace, by which the path of perfection is made very sweet and easy to us. Besides, there is no sacrament so capable of kindling the Divine love in souls as the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which Jesus Christ bestows on us His whole Self, in order to unite us all to Himself by means of holy love. Wherefore the Venerable Father John of Avila said : ' Whoever deters souls from frequent communion does the work of the devil.' Yes ; for the devil has a great horror of this Sacrament, from which souls derive immense strength to advance in Divine love.

27. But the proper preparation is requisite to communicate well. The first preparation, or, in other terms, the remote preparation, to be able to go to communion daily, or several times in the week, is, 1. To keep free from all deliberate affection to sin, that is to sin committed, as we say, with the eyes open. 2. The practice of much mental prayer. 3. The mortification of the senses and of the pas-

sions. St. Francis of Sales teaches as follows : 'Whoever has overcome the greatest part of his bad inclinations, and has arrived at a notable degree of perfection, can communicate every day.' The angelic doctor St. Thomas says, that any one who knows by experience that his soul derives an increase of Divine love from the Holy Communion, may communicate daily.¹⁶ Hence Innocent XI., in the above-mentioned decree, said that the greater or less frequency of Holy Communion must rest on the decision of the confessor, who ought to be guided in this matter by the profit which he sees accrue to the souls under his direction. In the next place, the proximate preparation for communion is that which is made on the morning itself of communion, for which there is need of at least half an hour of mental prayer.

28. To reap also more abundant fruit from communion, we must make a long thanksgiving. Father John of Avila said that the time after communion is 'a time to gain treasures of graces.' St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi used to say, that no time can be more calculated to inflame us with Divine love than the time immediately after our communion. And St. Teresa says : 'After communion let us be careful not to lose so good an opportunity of negotiating with God. His Divine Majesty is not accustomed to pay badly for His lodging, if He meets with a good reception.'

29. There are certain pusillanimous souls, who, on being exhorted to communicate more frequently, reply : 'But I am not worthy.' But, my sister, do you not know, that the more you refrain from communion, the more unworthy you become of it? Because, deprived of Holy Communion, you will have less strength, and will commit many faults. Well, then, obey your director, and be guided by him : faults do not forbid Holy Communion, when they are not committed with full will ; besides, among your failings, the greatest is, not to submit to what your spiritual father says to you.

30. 'But in my life past I was very bad.' And I reply, that you must know, that he who is weakest has most need of the physician and of medicine. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is our physician and medicine as well.' St. Ambrose said : 'I, who am always sinning, have always need

of medicine.'¹⁷ You will then say, perhaps : 'But my confessor does not tell me to communicate oftener.' If, then, he does not tell you to do so, ask him the permission to communicate oftener. Should he deny you, obey him ; but in the meantime make him the request. 'It would seem pride.' It would be pride if you were to wish to communicate against his wil., but not when you ask his consent with humility. This heavenly bread requires hunger. Jesus loves to be desired, *sitit sitiri*, says a devout author ; 'He thirsts to be thirsted for.' And what a thought is this : 'To-day I have communicated, and to-morrow I have to communicate.' Oh, how such a reflection keeps the soul attentive to avoid all defects and to do the will of God ! 'But I have no devotion.' If you mean sensible devotion, it is not necessary, neither does God always grant it even to His most beloved souls : it is enough for you to have the devotion of a will determined to belong wholly to God, and to make progress in His Divine love. John Gerson says, that he who abstains from communion, because he does not feel that devotion which he would like to feel, acts like a man who does not approach the fire because he does not feel warm.

31. Alas, my God, how many souls, for want of applying themselves to lead a life of greater recollection and more detachment from earthly things, care not to seek Holy Communion ! and this is the true cause of their not wishing to communicate more frequently. They are well aware that to be wishing always to appear, to dress with vanity, to be fond of nice eating and drinking, of bodily comforts, of conversations and amusements, does not harmonise with frequent communion ; they know that more prayer is required, more mortification, as well internal as external, more seclusion ; and on this account they are ashamed to approach the altar more frequently. Without doubt, such souls are right to refrain from frequent communion as long as they find themselves in that unhappy state of lukewarmness ; but whoever is called to a more perfect life should lay aside this lukewarmness, if he would not greatly risk his eternal salvation.

32. It will be found likewise to contribute very much

to keep fervour alive in the soul, often to make a spiritual communion, so much recommended by the Council of Trent, which exhorts all the faithful to practise it. The spiritual communion, as St. Thomas says,¹⁸ consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament; and therefore the saints were careful to make it several times in the day. The method of making it is this: 'My Jesus, I believe that Thou art really present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee, and I desire Thee; come to my soul. I embrace Thee; and I beseech Thee never to allow me to be separated from Thee again.' Or more briefly thus: 'My Jesus, come to me; I desire Thee; I embrace Thee; let us remain ever united together.' This spiritual communion may be practised several times a-day: when we make our prayer; when we make our visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and especially when we assist at Mass at the moment of the priest's communion. The Dominican Sister Blessed Angela of the Cross said, 'If my confessor had not taught me this method of communicating spiritually several times a-day, I should not have trusted myself to live.'

33. The fifth and most necessary means for the spiritual life, and for obtaining the love of Jesus Christ, is *prayer*. In the first place, I say that by this means God convinces us of the great love He bears us. What greater proof of affection can a person give to a friend than to say to him, 'My friend, ask any thing you like of me, and I will give it you?' Now this is precisely what our Lord says to us: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find" (Luke xi. 9). Wherefore prayer is called all-powerful with God to obtain every blessing: 'Prayer, though it is one, can effect all things,' as Theodoret says; whoever prays, obtains from God whatever he chooses. The words of David are beautiful: "Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me" (Ps. lxxv. 20). Commenting on this passage, St. Augustine says, 'As long as thou seest thyself not failing in prayer, be assured that the Divine mercy will not fail thee either.' And St. John Chrysostom: 'We always obtain, even while we are still praying.' When we pray to God,

He grants us the grace we ask for, even before we have ended our petition. If then we are poor, let us blame only ourselves, since we are poor merely because we wish to be poor, and so we are undeserving of pity. What sympathy can there be for a beggar, who, having a very rich master, and one most desirous to provide him with every thing, if he will only ask for it, nevertheless chooses still to continue in his poverty sooner than ask for what he wants? 'Behold,' says the Apostle, 'our God is ready to enrich all who call upon Him:' "Rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12).

34. Humble prayer, then, obtains all from God ; but we must be persuaded at the same time, that if it be useful, it is no less necessary for our salvation. It is certain that we absolutely require the Divine assistance, in order to overcome temptations; and sometimes, in certain more violent assaults, the sufficient grace which God gives to all, might possibly enable us to resist them; but on account of our inclination to evil, it will not ordinarily be sufficient, and we shall stand in need of a special grace. Whoever prays obtains this grace ; but whoever prays not, obtains it not, and is lost. And this is more especially the case with regard to the grace of *final perseverance*, of dying in the grace of God, which is the grace absolutely necessary for our salvation, and without which we should be lost for ever. St. Augustine says of this grace, that God only bestows it on those who pray. And this is the reason why so few are saved, because few indeed are mindful to beg of God this grace of perseverance.

35. In fine, the holy Fathers say, that prayer is necessary for us, not merely as a *necessity of precept* (so that divines say, that he who neglects for a month to recommend to God the affair of his salvation is not exempt from mortal sin), but also as a *necessity of means*, which is as much as to say, that whoever does not pray cannot possibly be saved. And the reason of it is, in short, because we cannot obtain eternal salvation without the help of Divine grace, and this grace Almighty God only accords to those who pray. And because temptations, and the **angers of falling into God's displeasure, continually beset**

us, so ought our prayers to be continual. Hence St. Thomas declares that continual prayer is necessary for a man to save himself: 'Unceasing prayer is necessary to man, that he may enter Heaven.'¹⁹ And Jesus Christ Himself had already said the same thing: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). And afterwards the Apostle: "Pray without ceasing" (Thess. v. 17). During the interval in which we shall cease to pray, the devil will conquer us. And though the grace of perseverance can in no wise be merited by us, as the Council of Trent teaches us,²⁰ nevertheless St. Augustine says, 'that in a certain sense we can merit it by prayer.'²¹ The Lord wishes to dispense His grace to us, but He will be entreated first; nay more, as St. Gregory remarks, He wills to be importuned, and in a manner constrained by our prayers: 'God wishes to be prayed to,—He wishes to be compelled,—He wishes to be, as it were, vanquished by our importunity.' St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, 'that when we ask graces of God, He not only hears us, but in a certain sense thanks us.' Yes, because God, as the infinite goodness, in wishing to pour out Himself upon others, has, so to speak, an infinite longing to distribute His gifts; but He wishes to be besought: hence it follows, that when He sees Himself entreated by a soul, He receives so much pleasure, that in a certain sense He thanks that soul for it.

36. Well, then, if we wish to preserve ourselves in the grace of God till death, we must act the mendicant, and keep our mouths open to beg for God's help, always repeating, 'My Jesus, mercy; never let me be separated from Thee; O Lord come to my aid; My God assist me!' This was the unceasing prayer of the ancient Fathers of the desert: 'Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me! O Lord, help me, and help me soon; for if Thou delayest Thy assistance, I shall fall and perish!' And this above all must be practised in the moment of temptation; he who acts otherwise is lost.

37. And let us have a great faith in prayer. God has promised to hear him that prays: "Ask, and you shall receive." How can we doubt, says St. Augustine, since God has bound Himself by express promise, and cannot fail to

grant us the favours we ask of Him? 'By promising He has made Himself our debtor.'²² In recommending ourselves to God, we must have a sure confidence that God hears us, and then we shall obtain whatever we want. Behold what Jesus Christ says: "All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you" (Mark xi. 24).

38. 'But,' some one may say, 'I am a sinner, and do not deserve to be heard.' But Jesus Christ says: "Every one that asketh, receiveth" (Luke xi. 10). Every one, be he just, or be he a sinner. St. Thomas teaches us that the efficacy of prayer to obtain graces does not depend on our merits, but on the mercy of God, who has promised to hear every one who prays to Him²³ And our Redeemer, in order to remove from us all fear when we pray, said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (John xvi. 23). As though He would say: Sinners, you have no merits of your own to obtain graces, wherefore do in this manner; when you would obtain graces, ask them of My Father in My name; that is, through My merits and through My love; and then ask as many as you choose, and they shall be granted to you. But let us mark well those words, 'In My name;' which signify (as St. Thomas explains it), 'in the name of the Saviour;' or, in other words, that the graces which we ask must be graces which regard our eternal salvation; and consequently we must remark that the promise does not regard temporal favours; these our Lord grants, when they are profitable for our eternal welfare; if they would prove otherwise, He refuses them. So that we should always ask for temporal favours, on condition that they will benefit our soul. But should they be spiritual graces, then they require no condition; but with confidence, and a sure confidence, we should say: 'Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ deliver me from this temptation: grant me holy perseverance, grant me Thy love, grant me Heaven.' We can likewise ask these graces of Jesus Christ in His own name; that is, by His merits, since we have His promise also to this effect: "If you shall ask Me any thing in My name, that I will do"

(John xiv. 14). And whilst we pray to God, let us not forget to recommend ourselves at the same time to Mary, the dispenser of graces. St. Bernard says, that it is Almighty God who bestows the graces; but He bestows them through the hands of Mary: 'Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks she finds, and cannot be refused.'²⁴ If Mary prays for us, we are safe; for every petition of Mary is heard, and she can never meet with a repulse.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Jesus, my Love, I am determined to love Thee as much as I can, and I wish to become a saint; and I wish to become a saint for this reason, in order to give Thee pleasure, and to love Thee exceedingly in this life and the next! I can do nothing of myself, but Thou canst do all things; and I know that Thou wishest me to become a saint. I see already that by Thy grace my soul sighs only for Thee, and seeks nothing else but Thee. I wish to live no more for myself; Thou desirest me to be wholly Thine, and I desire to be wholly Thine. Come, and unite me to Thyself, and Thyself to me. Thou art Infinite Goodness; Thou art He who hast loved me so much; Thou art, indeed, too loving and too lovely; how, then, can I love any thing but Thee? I prefer Thy love before all the things of this world; Thou art the sole object, the sole end of all my affections. I leave all to be occupied solely in loving Thee, my Redeemer, my Comforter, my Hope, my Love, and my All. I will not despair of becoming a saint on account of the sins of my past life; for I know, my Jesus, that Thou diedst in order to pardon the truly penitent. I love Thee now with my whole heart, with my whole soul; I love Thee more than myself, and I bewail, above every other evil, ever having had the misfortune to despise Thee, my Sovereign Good. Now I am no longer my own, I am Thine; O God of my heart, dispose of me as Thou pleasest. In order to please Thee, I accept of all the tribulations Thou mayest choose to send me—sickness, sorrow, troubles, ignominies, poverty, persecution, desolation

—I accept all to please Thee : in like manner I accept of the death Thou hast decreed for me, with all the anguish and crosses which may accompany it : it is enough if Thou grantest me the grace to love Thee exceedingly. Lend me Thy assistance; give me strength henceforth to compensate, by my love, for all the bitterness I have caused Thee in past time, O only love of my soul ! O Queen of Heaven, O Mother of God, O great advocate of sinners, I trust in you !

CHAPTER IX.

CHARITY IS NOT PUFFED UP.

He that loves Jesus Christ is not vain of his own worth, but humbles himself, and is glad to be humbled by others.

1. A PROUD person is like a balloon filled with air, which seems, indeed, great ; but whose greatness, in reality, is nothing more than a little air ; which, as soon as the balloon is opened, is quickly dispersed. He who loves God is humble, and is not elated at seeing any worth in himself ; because he knows that whatever he possesses is the gift of God, and that of his own he has only nothingness and sin ; so that this knowledge of the Divine favours bestowed on him, humbles him the more ; whilst he is conscious of being so unworthy, and yet so favoured by God.

2. St. Teresa says, in speaking of the especial favours she received from God : ‘ God does with me as they do with a house, which, when about to fall. they prop up with supports.’ When a soul receives a loving visit from God, and feels within herself an unwonted fervour of Divine love, accompanied with tears, or with a great tenderness of heart, let her beware of supposing that God so favours her, in reward for some good action ; but let her then humble herself the more, concluding that God caresses her in order that she may not forsake Him ; otherwise, were she to make such favours the subject of vain complacency, imagining herself more privileged, because she receives greater gifts from God than others, such a fault would induce God to deprive her of His favours. Two things are chiefly re-

quisite for the stability of a house, the foundation and the roof: the foundation in us must be humility, in acknowledging ourselves good for nothing, and capable of nothing; and the roof is the Divine assistance, in which alone we ought to put all our trust.

3. Whenever we behold ourselves unusually favoured by God, we must humble ourselves the more. When St. Teresa received any special favour, she used to strive to place before her eyes all the faults she had ever committed; and thus the Lord received her into closer union with Himself: the more a soul confesses herself undeserving of any favours, the more God enriches her with His graces. Thais, who was first a sinner and then a saint, humbled herself so profoundly before God, that she dared not even mention His Name; so that she had not the courage to say, 'My God;' but she said, 'My Creator, have mercy on me! *Plasmator meus, miserere mei*' And St. Jerome writes, that in recompense for such humility, she saw a glorious throne prepared for her in heaven. In the life of St. Margaret of Cortona we read the same thing; how, when our Lord visited her one day with greater tokens of tenderness and love, she exclaimed: 'But, O Lord, have You then forgotten what I have been? Is it possible that You can repay all my outrages against You with such exquisite sweetness?' And God replied, that when a soul loves Him, and cordially repents of having offended Him, He forgets all her past infidelities; as, indeed, He formerly spoke by the mouth of Ezechiel: "But if the wicked do penance I will not remember all his iniquities" (Ezech. xviii. 21-22). And in proof of this, He showed her a high throne, which He had prepared for her in heaven in the midst of the seraphim. Oh, that we could only well comprehend the value of humility! A single act of humility is worth more than all the riches of the universe.

4. It was the saying of St. Teresa, 'Think not that thou hast advanced far in perfection, till thou considerest thyself the worst of all, and desirest to be placed below all.' And on this maxim the saint acted, and so have done all the saints; St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and the rest, considered themselves the

greatest sinners in the world, and were surprised that the earth sheltered them, and did not rather open under their feet to swallow them up alive; and they expressed themselves to this effect with the sincerest conviction. The Venerable Father John of Avila, who from his earliest infancy had led a holy life, was on his death-bed; and the priest who came to attend him said many sublime things to him, taking him for what indeed he was, a great servant of God and a learned man; but Father Avila thus spoke to him: ‘Father, I pray you to make the recommendation of my soul, as of the soul of a criminal condemned to death; for such I am.’ This is the opinion which saints entertain of themselves in life and death.

5. We, too, must act in this manner, if we would save our souls, and keep ourselves in the grace of God till death, reposing all our confidence in God alone. The proud man relies on his own strength, and falls on that account; but the humble man, by placing all his trust in God alone, stands firm and falls not, however violent and multiplied the temptations may be; for his watch-word is: “I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me” (Phil. iv. 13). The devil at one time tempts us to presumption, at another time to diffidence: whenever he suggests to us that we are in no danger of falling, then we should tremble the more; for were God but for an instant to withdraw His grace from us, we are lost. When, again, he tempts us to diffidence, then let us turn to God, and thus address Him with great confidence: “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, I shall never be confounded” (Ps. xxx. 2). My God, in Thee I have put all my hopes; I hope never to meet with confusion, nor to be bereft of Thy grace. We ought to exercise ourselves continually, even to the very last moments of our life, in these acts of diffidence in ourselves and of confidence in God, always beseeching God to grant us humility.

6. But it is not enough, in order to be humble, to have a lowly opinion of ourselves, and to consider ourselves the miserable beings that we really are; the man who is truly humble, says Thomas à Kempis, despises himself, and wishes also to be despised by others. This is what Jesus Christ so

earnestly recommends us to practise, after His example : "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). Whoever styles himself the greatest sinner in the world, and then is angry when others despise him, plainly shows humility of tongue, but not of heart. St. Thomas Aquinas says, that a person who resents being slighted may be certain that he is far distant from perfection, even though he should work miracles. The Divine Mother sent St. Ignatius Loyola from heaven to instruct St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi in humility ; and behold the lesson which the saint gave her : ' Humility is a gladness at whatever leads us to despise ourselves.' Mark well, a *gladness* ; if the feelings are stirred with resentment at the contempt we receive, at least let us be glad in spirit.

7. And how is it possible for a soul not to love contempt, if she loves Jesus Christ, and beholds how her God was buffeted and spit upon, and how He suffered in His Passion ! "Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him ; and others struck His face with the palms of their hands" (Matt. xxvi. 67). For this purpose our Redeemer wishes us to keep His image exposed on our altars, not indeed representing Him in glory, but nailed to the cross, that we might have His ignominies constantly before our eyes ; a sight which made the saints rejoice at being vilified in this world. And such was the prayer which St. John of the Cross addressed to Jesus Christ, when He appeared to Him with the cross upon His shoulders : ' O Lord, let me suffer, and be despised for Thee !' My Lord, on beholding Thee so reviled for my love, I only ask of Thee to let me suffer and be despised for Thy love.

8. St. Francis of Sales said, ' To support injuries is the touchstone of humility and of true virtue.' If a person pretending to spirituality practises prayer, frequent communion, fasts, and mortifies himself, and yet cannot put up with an affront, or a biting word, what is it a sign of ? It is a sign that he is a hollow cane, without humility and without virtue. And what indeed can a soul do that loves Jesus Christ, if she is unable to endure a slight for the love of Jesus Christ, who has endured so much for her ? Thomas à Kempis, in his golden little book of the Imitation

of Christ, writes as follows : ‘ Since you have such an abhorrence of being humbled, it is a sign that you are not dead to the world, have no humility, and that you do not keep God before your eyes. He that has not God before his eyes, is disturbed at every syllable of censure that he hears.’ Thou canst not endure cuffs and blows for God ; endure at least a passing word.

9. Oh, what surprise and scandal does that person occasion, who communicates often, and then is ready to resent every little word of contempt ! On the contrary, what edification does a soul give that answers contempts with words of mildness, spoken in order to conciliate the offender ; or perhaps makes no reply at all, nor complains of it to others, but continues with placid looks, and without showing the least sign of indignation ! St. John Chrysostom says, that a meek person is not only serviceable to himself but likewise to others, by the good example he sets them of meekness in bearing contempt : ‘ The meek man is useful to himself and to others.’ Thomas à Kempis mentions, with regard to this subject, several things in which we should practise humility ; he says as follows : ‘ What others say shall command an attentive hearing, and what you say shall be taken no notice of. Others shall make a request and obtain it ; you shall ask for something and meet with a refusal. Others shall be magnified in the mouths of men, and on you no one shall bestow a word. Such and such an office shall be conferred on others, but you shall be passed by as unfit for any thing. With such like trials the Lord is wont to prove his faithful servant ; and to see how far he has learnt to overcome himself and to hold his peace. Nature, indeed, will at times not like it ; but you will derive immense profit thereby, if you support all in silence.’

10. It was a saying of St. Jane of Chantal, that ‘ a person who is truly humble takes occasion from receiving some humiliation to humble himself the more.’ Yes, for he who is truly humble never supposes himself humbled as much as he deserves. Those who behave in this manner are styled *blessed* by Jesus Christ. They are not called blessed who are esteemed by the world, who are honoured and praised,

as noble, as learned, as powerful ; but they who are spoken ill of by the world, who are persecuted and calumniated ; for it is for such that a glorious reward is prepared in heaven, if they only bear all with patience: "Blessed are you when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for My sake : be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven" (Matt. v. 11, 12).

11. The grand occasion for practising humility is when we receive correction for some fault from superiors or from others. Some people resemble the hedgehog : they seem all calmness and meekness as long as they remain untouched ; but no sooner does a superior or a friend touch them, by an observation on something which they have done imperfectly, than they forthwith become all prickles, and answer warmly, that so and so is not true, or that they were right in doing so, or that such a correction is quite uncalled for : in a word, to rebuke them is to become their enemy ; they behave like persons who rave at the surgeon for paining them in the cure of their wounds. ' *Medicanti irascitur,*' writes St. Bernard. 'When the virtuous and humble man is corrected for a fault,' says St. John Chrysostom, 'he grieves for having committed it ; the proud man on the other hand, on receiving correction, grieves also ; but he grieves that his fault is detected ; and on this account he is troubled, gives answers, and is angry at the person who corrects him.' This is the golden rule given by St. Philip Neri, to be observed with regard to receiving correction : 'Whoever would really become a saint must never excuse himself, although what is laid to his charge be not true.' And there is only one case to be excepted from this rule, and that is when self-defence may appear necessary to prevent scandal. Oh, what merit with God has that soul which is wrongfully reprehended, and yet keeps silence, and refrains from defending herself ! St. Teresa said : 'There are occasions when a soul makes more progress and acquires a greater degree of perfection by refraining from excusing herself than by listening to ten sermons ; because, by not excusing herself she begins

to obtain freedom of spirit, and to be heedless whether the world speaks well or ill of her.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Incarnate Word! I entreat Thee, by the merits of Thy holy humility, which led Thee to embrace so many ignominies and injuries for our love, deliver me from all pride, and grant me a share of Thy humility. And what right have I to complain of any affront whatever that may be offered me, after having so often deserved hell? O my Jesus, by the merit of all the scorn and affronts endured for me in Thy Passion, grant me the grace to live and die humbled on this earth, as Thou didst live and die humbled for my sake. For Thy love I would willingly be despised and forsaken by all the world; but without Thee I can do nothing. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good; I love Thee, O beloved of my soul! I love Thee; and I hope, through Thee, to fulfil my purpose of suffering all for Thee,—affronts, betrayals, persecutions, afflictions, dryness, and desolation; enough is it for me if Thou dost not forsake me, O sole object of the love of my soul. Suffer me never more to estrange myself from Thee. Enkindle in me the desire to please Thee. Grant me fervour in loving Thee. Give me peace of mind in suffering for Thee. Give me resignation in all contradictions. Have mercy on me. I deserve nothing; but I fix all my hopes in Thee, who hast purchased me with Thine own blood. And I hope all from you, too, O my Queen and my Mother Mary, who art the refuge of sinners!

CHAPTER X.

CHARITY IS NOT AMBITIOUS.

He that loves Jesus Christ desires nothing but Jesus Christ.

1. HE that loves God does not desire to be esteemed and loved by his fellow-men: the single desire of his heart is to enjoy the favour of Almighty God, Who alone forms the

object of his love. St. Hilary writes, that all honour paid by the world is the business of the devil.²⁵ And so it is; for the enemy traffics for hell, when he infects the soul with the desire of esteem; because, by thus laying aside humility, she runs great risks of plunging into every vice. St. James writes, that as God confers His graces with open hands upon the humble, so does He close them against the proud, whom he resists. "God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble" (James iv. 6). He says, He *resists* the proud, signifying that He does not even listen to their prayers. And certainly, among the acts of pride we may reckon the desire to be honoured by men, and self-exaltation at receiving honours from them.

2. We have a frightful example of this in the history of Brother Justin the Franciscan, who had even risen to a lofty state of contemplation; but because perhaps—and indeed without a perhaps—he nourished within himself a desire of human esteem, behold what befell him. One day Pope Eugenius IV. sent for him; and on account of the great opinion he had of his sanctity, showed him peculiar marks of honour, embraced him, and made him sit by his side. Such high honours filled Brother Justin full of self-conceit; on which St. John Capistran said to him, 'Alas, Brother Justin, thou didst leave us an angel, and thou returnest a devil!' And in fact, the hapless Brother becoming daily more and more puffed up with arrogance, and insisting on being treated according to his own estimate of himself, he at last murdered a brother with a knife; he afterwards became an apostate, and fled into the kingdom of Naples, where he perpetrated other atrocities; and there he died in prison, an apostate to the last. Hence it is that a certain great servant of God wisely said, that when we hear or read of the fall of some towering cedars of Libanus, of a Solomon, a Tertullian, an Osius, who had all the reputation of saints, it is a sign that they were not given wholly to God; but nourished inwardly some spirit of pride, and so fell away. Let us therefore tremble, when we feel arise within us an ambition to appear in public, and to be esteemed by the world; and when the world pays us some tribute of honour, let us beware of

taking complacency in it, which might prove the cause of our utter ruin.

3. Let us especially be on our guard against all ambitious seeking of preference, and sensibility in points of honour. St. Teresa said, 'Where punctiliousness prevails, there spirituality will never prevail.' Many persons make profession of a spiritual life, but they are worshippers of self. They have the semblance of certain virtues, but they are ambitious of being praised in all their undertakings; and if nobody else praises them, they praise themselves: in short, they strive to appear better than others; and if their honour be touched, they lose their peace, they leave off Holy Communion, they omit all their devotions, and find no rest till they imagine they have got back their former standing. The true lovers of God do not so behave. They not only carefully shun every word of self-esteem and all self-complacency, but, further, they are sorry at hearing themselves commended by others, and their gladness is to behold themselves held in small repute by the rest of men.

4. That saying of St. Francis of Assisi is most true: 'What I am before God, that I am.' Of what use is it to pass for great in the eyes of the world, if before God we be vile and worthless? And on the contrary, what matters it to be despised by the world, provided we be dear and acceptable in the eyes of God? St. Augustine thus writes: 'The approbation of him who praises neither heals a bad conscience, nor does the reproach of one who blames wound a good conscience.'²⁶ As the man who praises us cannot deliver us from the chastisement of our evil doings, so neither can he who blames us rob us of the merit of our good actions. 'What does it matter,' says St. Teresa, 'though we be condemned and reviled by creatures, if before Thee, O God! we are great and without blame?' The saints had no other desire but to live unknown, and to pass for contemptible in the estimation of all. Thus writes St. Francis of Sales: 'But what wrong do we suffer when people have a bad opinion of us, since we ought to have such of ourselves? Perhaps we know that we are bad, and yet wish to pass off for good in the estimation of others.'

5. Oh, what security is found in the hidden life for such as wish cordially to love Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ Himself set us the example, by living hidden and despised for thirty years in a workshop. And with the same view of escaping the esteem of men, the saints went and hid themselves in deserts and in caves. It was said by St. Vincent of Paul, that a love of appearing in public, and of being spoken of in terms of praise, and of hearing our conduct commended, or that people should say that we succeed admirably and work wonders, is an evil which, while it makes us unmindful of God, contaminates our best actions, and proves the most fatal drawback to the spiritual life.

6. Whoever, therefore, would make progress in the love of Jesus Christ, must absolutely give a death-blow to the love of self-esteem. But how shall we inflict this blow? Behold how St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi instructs us: 'That which keeps alive the appetite for self-esteem is the occupying a favourable position in the minds of all; consequently the death of self-esteem is to keep oneself hidden, so as not to be known to any one. And till we learn to die in this manner, we shall never be true servants of God.'

7. In order, then, to be pleasing in the sight of God, we must avoid all ambition of appearing and of making a parade in the eyes of men. And we must shun with still greater caution the ambition of governing others. Sooner than behold this accursed ambition set foot in the convent, St. Teresa declared she would prefer to have the whole convent burnt, and all the nuns with it. So that she signified her wish, that if ever one of her religious should be caught aiming at the superiority, she should be expelled from the community, or at least undergo perpetual confinement. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, 'The honour of a spiritual person consists in being put below all, and in abhorring all superiority over others.' The ambition of a soul that loves God should be to excel all others in humility, according to the counsel of St. Paul: "In humility let each esteem others better than them-

selves" (Phil. ii. 3). In a word, he that loves God **must** make God the sole object of his ambition.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My Jesus, grant me the ambition of pleasing Thee, and make me forget all creatures and myself also. What will it profit me to be loved by the whole world, if I be not loved by Thee, the only love of my soul! My Jesus, Thou camest into the world to win our hearts; if I am unable to give Thee my heart, do Thou please to take it and replenish it with Thy love, and never allow me to be separated from Thee any more. I have, alas, turned my back upon Thee in the past; but now that I am conscious of the evil I have done, I grieve over it with my whole heart, and no affliction in the world can so distress me, as the remembrance of the offences I have so often committed against Thee. I am consoled to think that Thou art Infinite Goodness, that Thou dost not disdain to love a sinner who loves Thee. My beloved Redeemer, O sweetest Love of my soul, I have heretofore slighted Thee; but now at least I love Thee more than myself! I offer Thee myself and all that belongs to me. I have only the one wish to love Thee, and to please Thee. This forms all my ambition; accept of it, and be pleased to increase it, and exterminate in me all desire of earthly goods. Thou art indeed deserving of love, and great indeed are my obligations of loving Thee. Behold me then, I wish to be wholly Thine; and I will suffer whatever Thou pleasest, Thou who for love of me didst die of sorrow on the cross! Thou wishest me to be a saint; Thou canst make me a saint; in Thee I place my trust. And I also confide in your protection, O Mary, great Mother of God!

CHAPTER XI.

CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN.

He that loveth Jesus Christ seeks to detach himself from every creature.

1. WHOEVER desires to love Jesus Christ with his whole heart must banish from his heart all that is not God, but is merely self-love. This is the meaning of those words, 'seeketh not her own;' not to seek ourselves, but only what pleaseth God. And this is what God requires of us all, when He says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart" (Matt. xxii. 37). Two things are needful to love God with our whole heart: 1. To clear it of earth. 2. To fill it with holy love. It follows, that a heart in which any earthly affections linger can never belong wholly to God. St. Philip Neri said, 'that as much love as we bestow on the creature, is so much taken from the Creator.' In the next place, how must the earth be purged away from the heart? Truly by mortification and detachment from creatures. Some souls complain that they seek God, and do not find Him; let them listen to what St. Teresa says: 'Wean your heart from creatures, and seek God, and you will find Him.'

2. The mistake is, that some indeed wish to become saints, but after their own fashion; they would love Jesus Christ, but in their own way, without forsaking those diversions, that vanity of dress, those delicacies in food: they love God, but if they do not succeed in obtaining such or such an office, they live discontented; if, too, they happen to be touched in point of esteem, they are all on fire; if they do not recover from an illness, they lose all patience. They love God; but they refuse to let go that attachment for the riches, the honours of the world, for the vain glory of being reckoned of good family; of great learning, and better than others. Such as these practise prayer, and frequent Holy Communion; but inasmuch as they take with them hearts full of earth, they derive little profit. Our Lord does not even speak to them, for He knows that it is but a waste of words. In fact, He said as

much to St. Teresa on a certain occasion : ‘ I would speak to many souls, but the world keeps up such a noise about their ears, that My voice would never be heard by them. Oh, that they would retire a little from the world ! ’ Who-soever, then, is full of earthly affections cannot even so much as hear the voice of God that speaks to him. But unhappy the man that continues attached to the sensible goods of this earth ; he may easily become so blinded by them as one day to quit the love of Jesus Christ ; and for want of forsaking these transitory goods he may lose God, the Infinite Good, for ever. St. Teresa said : ‘ It is a reasonable consequence, that he who runs after perishable goods should himself perish. ’

3. St. Augustine²⁷ informs us that Tiberius Cæsar desired that the Roman senate should enrol Jesus Christ among the rest of their gods ; but the senate refused to do so, on the ground that He was too proud a God, and would be worshipped alone without any companions. It is quite true ; God will be alone the object of our adoration and love ; not indeed from pride, but because it is His just due, and because too of the love He bears us. For as He Himself loves us exceedingly, He desires in return all our love ; and is therefore jealous of any one else sharing the affections of our hearts, of which He desires to be the sole possessor : ‘ Jesus is a jealous lover,’ says St. Jerome ; and He is unwilling therefore for us to fix our affections on any thing but Himself. And whenever He beholds any created object taking a share of our hearts, He looks on it as it were with jealousy, as the Apostle St. James says, because He will not endure a rival, but will remain the sole object of all our love : “ Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain : To envy doth the Spirit covet which dwelleth in you ” (James iv. 5). The Lord, in the sacred Canticles, praises His spouse, saying : “ My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed ” (Cant. iv. 12). He calls her ‘ a garden enclosed,’ because the soul which is His spouse keeps her heart shut against every earthly love, in order to preserve all for Jesus Christ alone. And does Jesus Christ perchance not deserve all our love ? Ah, too much, too much has He deserved it, both for His own goodness and for His

love towards us. The saints knew this well, and for this reason St. Francis of Sales said : ‘ Were I conscious of one fibre in my heart that did not belong to God, I would forthwith tear it out.’

4. David longed to have wings free from all linc of worldly affections, in order to fly away and repose in God : “ Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest ? ” (Ps. liv. 7.) Many souls would wish to see themselves released from every earthly trammel to fly to God, and would in reality make lofty flights in the way of sanctity, if they would but detach themselves from every thing in this world ; but whereas they retain some little inordinate affection, and will not use violence with themselves to get rid of it, they remain always languishing on in their misery, without ever so much as lifting a foot from the ground. St. John of the Cross said : ‘ The soul that remains with her affections attached to any thing, however small, will, notwithstanding many virtues which she may possess, never arrive at Divine union ; for it signifies little whether the bird be tied by a slight thread or a thick one ; since, however slight it may be, provided she does not break it, she remains always bound, and unable to fly. Oh, what a pitiful thing it is to see certain souls, rich in spiritual exercises, in virtues and Divine favours ; yet, because they are not bold enough to break off some trifling attachment, they cannot attain to Divine union, for which it only needed one strong and resolute flight to break effectually that fatal thread ! Since, when once the soul is emptied of all affection to creatures, God cannot help communicating Himself wholly to her.’

5. He who would possess God entirely must give himself up entirely to God : “ My beloved to me, and I to him ” (Cant. ii. 16), says the Sacred Spouse. My beloved has given Himself entirely to me, and I give myself entirely to Him. The love which Jesus Christ bears us causes Him to desire all our love ; and without all He is not satisfied. On this account we find St. Teresa thus writing to the prioress of one of her convents : ‘ Endeavour to train souls to a total detachment from every thing created, because they are to be trained for the spouses of a king so jealous,

that He would have them even forget themselves.' St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi took a little book of devotion from one of her novices, merely because she observed that she was too much attached to it. Many souls acquit themselves of the duty of prayer, of visiting the Blessed Sacrament, of frequenting Holy Communion; but nevertheless, they make little or no progress in perfection, and all because they keep some fondness for something in their heart; and if they persist in living thus, they will not only be always miserable, but run the risk of losing all.

6. We must, therefore, beseech Almighty God, with David, to rid our heart of all earthly attachments: "Create a clean heart in me, O God" (Ps. l. 12). Otherwise we can never be wholly His. He has given us to understand very plainly, that whoever will not renounce every thing in this world, cannot be His disciple: "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 35). For this reason the ancient fathers of the desert were accustomed first to put this question to any youth who desired to associate himself to them: 'Dost thou bring an empty heart, that the Holy Spirit may fill it?' Our Lord said the same thing to St. Gertrude, when she besought Him to signify what He wished of her: 'I wish nothing else, He said, but to find a heart devoid of creatures.' We must therefore say to God with great resolution and courage: O Lord, I prefer Thee to all; to health, to riches, to honours and dignities, to applause, to learning, to consolations, to high hopes, to desires, and even to the very graces and gifts which I may receive of Thee! In short, I prefer Thee to every created good which is not Thee, O my God. Whatever benefit Thou grantest me, O my God, nothing besides Thyself will satisfy me. I desire Thee alone, and nothing else.

7. When the heart is detached from creatures, the Divine love immediately enters and fills it. Moreover, St. Teresa said: 'As soon as evil occasions are removed, the heart forthwith turns herself to love God.' Yes, for the human heart cannot exist without loving; it must either love the Creator or creatures: if it does not love creatures, **then** assuredly it will love God. In short, we must leave all

in order to gain all. 'All for all,' says Thomas à Kempis. As long as St. Teresa cherished a certain affection, though pure, towards one of her relations, she did not wholly belong to God ; but when afterwards she summoned courage, and resolutely cut off the attachment, then she deserved to hear these words from Jesus : ' Now, Teresa, thou art all mine, and I am all thine.' One heart is quite too small to love this God, so loving and so lovely, and who merits an infinite love ; and shall we then think of dividing this one little heart between creatures and God ? The Venerable Lewis da Ponte felt ashamed to speak thus to God : ' O Lord, I love Thee above all things, above riches, honours, friends, relations ;' for it seemed to him as much as to say : ' O Lord, I love Thee more than dirt, than smoke and the worms of the earth !'

8. The Prophet Jeremias says, that the Lord is all goodness towards him who seeks Him : ' The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him' (Lam. iii. 25). But he understands it of a soul that seeks God alone. O blessed loss ! O blessed gain ! to lose worldly goods, which cannot satisfy the heart and are soon gone, in order to obtain the sovereign and eternal good, which is God ! It is related that a pious hermit, one day while the king was hunting through the wood, began to run to and fro as if in search of something ; the king, observing him thus occupied, inquired of him who he was and what he was doing ; the hermit replied : ' And may I ask your majesty what you are engaged about in this desert ?' The king made answer : ' I am going in pursuit of game.' And the hermit replied : ' I, too, am going in pursuit of God.' With these words, he continued his road and went away. During the present life this must likewise be our only thought, our only purpose, to go in search of God in order to love Him, and in search of His will in order to fulfil it, ridding our heart of all love of creatures. And whenever some worldly good would present itself to our imaginations to solicit our love, let us be ready prepared with this answer : ' I have despised the kingdom of this world, and all the charms of this life, for the sake of the love of my Lord Jesus Christ.' And what else are all the dignities and grandeurs of this world but smoke,

filth, and vanity, which all disappear at death? Blessed he who can say: 'My Jesus, I have left all for Thy love; Thou art my only love: Thou alone art sufficient for me.'

9. Ah, when once the love of God takes full possession of a soul, she of her own accord (supposing always, of course, the assistance of Divine grace) strives to divest herself of every thing that could prove a hindrance to her belonging wholly to God. St. Francis of Sales remarked, that when a house catches fire, all the furniture is thrown out of the window; meaning thereby, that when a person gives himself entirely to God, he needs no persuasion of preachers or confessors, but of his own accord seeks to get rid of every earthly affection. Father Segneri the younger called Divine love a robber, which happily despoils us of all, that we may come into possession of God alone. A certain man, of respectable position in life, having renounced every thing in order to become poor for the love of Jesus Christ, was questioned by a friend, how he fell into such a state of poverty; he took from his pocket a small volume of the Gospels, and said: 'Behold, this is what has stripped me of all.' The Holy Spirit says: "If a man shall give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing" (Cant. viii. 7). And when a soul fixes her whole love in God, she despises all, wealth, pleasures, dignities, territories, kingdoms, and all her longing is after God alone; she says, again and again: 'My God, I wish for Thee only, and nothing more.' St. Francis of Sales writes: 'The pure love of God consumes every thing which is not God, to convert all into itself; for whatever we do for the love of God is love.'

10. The Sacred Spouse said: "He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me" (Cant. ii. 4). This cellar of wine, writes St. Teresa, is Divine love, which, on taking possession of a soul, so perfectly inebriates it, as to make it forgetful of every thing created. A person intoxicated is as it were dead in his senses; he neither sees, nor hears, nor speaks: and so it happens to the soul inebriated with Divine love. She has no longer any sense of the things of the world; she wishes to think only of God, to speak only of God; she recognises no other motive in all

her actions but to love and to please God. In the sacred Canticles the Lord forbids them to awake His beloved, who sleeps : "Stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake, till she please" (Cant. ii. 7). This blessed sleep, enjoyed by souls espoused to Jesus Christ, says St. Basil, is nothing else than 'the utter oblivion of all things,' a virtuous and voluntary forgetfulness of every created thing, in order to be occupied solely with God, and to be able to exclaim with St. Francis, *Deus meus et omnia*, 'My God and my all.' My God, what are riches, and dignities, and goods of the world, compared with Thee ! Thou art my all and my every good. Thomas à Kempis writes, *Deus meus et omnia*, 'My God and my all.' Oh, sweet word ! It speaks enough for him who understands it ; and to him who loves, it is most delicious to repeat again and again : My God and my all, my God and my all !

11. Wherefore, to arrive at perfect union with God, a total detachment from creatures is of absolute necessity. And to come to particulars, we must divest ourselves of all inordinate affection towards relations. Jesus Christ said : "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). And wherefore this hatred to relations ? because generally, as regards the interests of the soul, we cannot have greater enemies than our own kindred : "And a man's enemies shall be those of his own household" (Matt. x. 36). St. Charles Borromeo declared that he never went to pay a visit to his family without returning cooled in fervour. And when Father Antony Mendoza was asked why he refused to enter the house of his parents, he replied, 'Because I know, by experience, that nowhere is the devotion of religious so dissipated as in the house of parents.'

12. When, moreover, the choice of a state of life is concerned, it is certain that we are not obliged to obey our parents, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas.²⁸ Should a young man be called to the religious life, and find opposition from his parents, he is bound to obey God, and not his parents, who, as the same St. Thomas says, with a view to their own interests and private ends, stand

in the way of our spiritual welfare. 'Friends of flesh and blood are oftentimes opposed to our spiritual profit.'²⁹ And they are content, says St. Bernard, to have their children go to eternal perdition, rather than leave home.

13. It is surprising, in this matter, to see some fathers and mothers, even though fearing God, yet so blinded by mistaken fondness, that they use every effort, and exhaust every means, to hinder the vocation of a child who wishes to become a religious. This conduct, however (except in very rare cases), cannot be excused from grievous sin. But some one may say: What, then, and if such a youth does not become a religious, can he not be saved? Are, then, all who remain in the world cast away? I answer: Those whom God does not call into religion may be saved in the world, by fulfilling the duties of their state; but those who are called from the world, and do not obey God, may, indeed, possibly be saved; but they will be saved with difficulty, because they will be deprived of those helps which God had destined for them in religion, and for want of which they will not accomplish their salvation. The theologian Habert writes, that he who disobeys his vocation, remains in the Church like a member out of joint, and cannot discharge his duty without the greatest pain; and so will hardly effect his salvation. Whence he draws this conclusion: 'Although, absolutely speaking, he can be saved, yet he will enter on the way, and employ the means, of salvation with difficulty.'³⁰

14. The choice of a state of life is compared by Father Lewis of Grenada to 'the main-spring' in a watch: if the main-spring be broken, the whole watch is out of order; and the same holds good with regard to our salvation,—if the state of life be out of order, the whole life is out of order too. Alas, how many poor youths have lost their vocation through their parents, and have afterwards come to a bad end, and have themselves proved the ruin of their family! There was a certain youth who lost his religious vocation at the instigation of his father; but in course of time, conceiving a great dislike of this same father, he killed him with his own hand, and was executed for the crime. Another young man, whilst pursuing his studies

in the seminary, was also called by God to leave the world: heedless of his vocation, he first left off the devout life he was leading, prayer, Holy Communion, &c. ; then he gave himself up to vice ; and eventually, as he was one night leaving a house of ill-fame, where he had been, he was murdered by his rival. Several priests ran to the spot, but they found him already dead. And, oh, what a sad catalogue of like examples could I here add !*

21. Moreover, any one that would belong wholly to God, must be free of all human respect. Oh, how many souls does this accursed respect keep aloof from God, and even separate them from Him for ever ! For instance, if they hear mention made of some or other of their failings, oh, what do they not do to justify themselves, and to convince the world that it is a calumny ! If they perform some good work, how industrious are they to circulate it every where ! They would have it known to the whole world, in order to be universally applauded. The saints behave in a very different way : they would rather publish their defects to the whole world, in order to pass in the eyes of all for the miserable creatures which they really are in their own eyes ; and, on the contrary, in practising any act of virtue, they prefer to have God alone know of it ; for their only care is, to be acceptable to Him. It is on this account that so many of them were enchanted with solitude, mindful, as they were, of the words of Jesus Christ : " But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth " (St. Matt. vi. 3-5). And again : " But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber ; and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret " (St. Matt. v. 6). But of all things, self-detachment is most needful ; that is, detachment from self-will. Only once succeed in subduing yourself, and you will easily triumph in every other combat. *Vince teipsum*, ' Conquer thyself,' was the maxim which St. Francis Xavier inculcated on all. And Jesus Christ said : " If any one would come after Me, let him deny himself " (St. Matt. xvi.

* A few paragraphs are here omitted, as applicable only to priests, and candidates for holy orders. They will therefore be inserted in a future volume.

(24). Behold in small compass all that we need practise to become saints ; to deny ourselves, and not to follow our own will : " Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will " (Eccles. xviii. 30). And this is the greatest grace, said St. Francis of Assisi, that we can receive from God : the power, namely, to conquer ourselves by denying self-will. St. Bernard writes, that if all men would resist self-will, none would ever be damned : ' Let self-will cease, and there will be no hell.' The same saint writes, that it is the baneful effect of self-will to contaminate even our good works : ' Self-will is a great evil, since it renders thy good works no longer good.' As, for instance, were a penitent obstinately bent on mortifying himself, or on fasting, or on taking the discipline against the will of his director ; we see that this act of penance, done at the instigation of self-will, becomes very defective. Unhappy the man that lives the slave of self-will ! for he shall have a yearning for many things and shall not possess them ; while, on the other hand, he will be forced to undergo many things distasteful and bitter to his inclinations : " From whence are wars and contentions among you ? Are they not hence ? From your concupiscences, which war in your members ? You covet, and have not " (St. James iv. 1, 2). The first war springs from the appetite for sensual delights. Let us take away the occasion ; let us mortify the eyes ; let us recommend ourselves to God, and the war will be over. The second war arises from the covetousness of riches : let us cultivate a love of poverty, and this war will cease. The third war has its source in ambitiously seeking after honours : let us love humility and the hidden life, and this war too will be no more. The fourth war, and the most ruinous of all, comes from self-will : let us practise resignation in all things which happen by the will of God, and the war will cease. St. Bernard tells us, that whenever we see a person troubled, the origin of his trouble is nothing else but his inability to gratify self-will. ' Whence comes disquiet,' says the saint, ' except that we follow self-will ?' Our Blessed Lord once complained of this to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in these words : ' Certain souls desire My Spirit, but after

their own fantasy ; and so they become incapable of receiving it.'

23. We must therefore love God in the way that pleases God, and not that pleases us. God will have the soul divested of all, in order to be united to Himself, and to be replenished with His Divine love. St. Teresa writes as follows : 'The prayer of union appears to me to be nothing more than to die utterly, as it were, to all things in this world, for the enjoyment of God alone. One thing is certain, that the more completely we empty ourselves of creatures, by detaching ourselves from them for the love of God, the more abundantly will He fill us with Himself, and the more closely shall we be united with Him.' Many spiritual persons would attain to union with God; but then they do not desire the contrarieties which God sends them: they fret at having to suffer from ill-health, from poverty, from affronts; but, for want of resignation, they will never come to a perfect union with God. Let us hear what St. Catherine of Genoa said : 'To arrive at union with God, the contrarieties which God sends us are absolutely necessary; His purpose is, to consume in us, by means of them, all irregular movements, both within and without. And hence all contempt, ailments, poverty, temptations, and other trials, are all indispensable, to give us the opportunity of fighting; that so, by the way of victory, we may eventually extinguish all inordinate movements, so as to be no more sensible of them; furthermore, until we begin to find contradictions sweet for God's sake, instead of bitter, we shall never arrive at Divine union.

24. I here subjoin the practice of it, taught by St. John of the Cross. The saint says, that in order to perfect union, 'a thorough mortification of the senses and of the appetites is necessary. On the part of the senses, every single relish that presents itself to them, if it be not purely for the glory of God, should forthwith be rejected for the love of Jesus Christ; for example, should you have a desire to see or hear something in no wise conducive to the greater glory of God, then refrain from it. As to the appetites also, endeavour to force ourselves always to choose the worst, the most disagreeable, or the poorest,

without fostering any other wish than to suffer and to be despised.' In a word, he that truly loves Jesus Christ loses all affection for things of earth and seeks to strip himself of all, in order to keep himself united with Jesus Christ alone. Jesus is the object of all his desires, Jesus the subject of all his thoughts; for Jesus he continually sighs; in every place, at every time, on every occasion, his sole aim is to give pleasure to Jesus. But to reach this point, we must study unceasingly to rid the heart of every affection which is not for God. And, I ask, what is meant by giving the soul entirely to God? It means, firstly, to shun whatever may be displeasing to God, and to do what is most pleasing to Him; secondly, it means to accept unreservedly all that comes from His hands, how hard or disagreeable soever it may be; it means, thirdly, to give the preference in all things to the will of God over our own: this is what is meant by belonging wholly to God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Ah, my God and my All! I cannot help feeling that, in spite of all my ingratitude and remissness in Thy service, Thou still invitest me to love Thee. Behold me, then; I will resist Thee no longer. I will leave all to be wholly Thine. I will no more live for myself: Thy claims on my love are too strong. My soul is enamoured of Thee; my Jesus, it sighs after Thee. And how can I possibly love any thing else, after seeing Thee die of sufferings on a cross in order to save me! how could I behold Thee dead, and exhausted with torments, and not love Thee with my whole heart? Yes, I love Thee indeed with all my soul; and I have no other desire but to love Thee in this life and for all eternity. My Love, my Hope, my Courage, and my Consolation, give me strength to be faithful to Thee; grant me light, and make known to me from what I ought to detach myself; supply me too with a strong will to obey Thee in all things. O Love of my soul! I offer myself, and deliver myself up entirely, to satisfy the desire which Thou hast to unite Thyself with me, that I may be wholly united with Thee, my God and my All. Oh, come then, my Jesus; come and take possession of my whole self, and occupy all

my thoughts and all my affections. I renounce all my appetites, all my comforts, and all created things; Thou alone art sufficient for me. Grant me the grace to think only of Thee, to desire only Thee, to seek only Thee, my Beloved and my only Good! O Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me holy perseverance!

CHAPTER XII.

CHARITY IS NOT PROVOKED TO ANGER.

He that loves Jesus Christ is never angry with his neighbour.

1. THE virtue not to be angry at the contrarieties that happen to us is the daughter of meekness. We have already spoken at large of the acts which belong to meekness in preceding chapters; but since this is a virtue which requires to be constantly practised by every one living among his fellow-men, we will here make some remarks on the same subject more in particular, and more adapted for practice.

2. Humility and meekness were the favourite virtues of Jesus Christ; so that He bade His disciples learn of Him to be meek and humble: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (St. Matt. xi. 29). Our Redeemer was called the Lamb,— "Behold the Lamb of God,"—as well in consideration of His having to be offered in sacrifice on the cross for our sins, as in consideration of the meekness exhibited by Him during His entire life, but more especially at the time of His Passion. When in the house of Caiphas He received a blow from that servant, who at the same time upbraided Him with presumption in those words: "Answerest thou the high-priest so?" Jesus only answered: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?" (St. John xviii. 23.) He observed the same invariable meekness of conduct till death. While on the cross, and made the object of universal scorn and blasphemy, He only besought the Eternal Father to forgive them: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (St. Luke xxiii. 34).

3. Oh, how dear to Jesus Christ are those meek **souls** who, in suffering affronts, derisions, calumnies, persecutions, and even chastisement and blows, are not irritated against the person that thus injures or strikes them: "The prayer of the meek hath always pleased thee" (Judith ix. 16). God is always pleased with the prayers of the meek; that is to say, their prayers are always heard. Heaven is expressly promised to the meek: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land" (St. Matt. v. 4). Father Alvarez said that paradise is the country of those who are despised and persecuted and trodden under-foot. Yes, for it is for them that the possession of the eternal kingdom is reserved, and not for the haughty, who are honoured and esteemed by the world. David declares that the meek shall not only inherit eternal happiness, but shall likewise enjoy great peace in the present life: "The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace" (Ps. xxxvi. 11). It is so, because the saints harbour no malice against those who ill-treat them, but rather love them the more; and the Lord, in reward for their patience, gives them an increase of interior peace. St. Teresa said: 'I seem to experience a renewed love towards those persons who speak ill of me.' This gave occasion to the Sacred Congregation to say of the saint, that 'even affronts themselves supplied her with the food of charity.' Offences became a fresh reason for her to love the person who had offended her. No one can have such meekness as this, if he has not a great humility and a low opinion of himself, so as to consider himself worthy of every kind of contempt; and hence we see, on the contrary, that the proud are always irritable and vindictive, because they have a high conceit of themselves, and esteem themselves worthy of all honour.

4. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Apoc. xiv. 13). We must, indeed, die in the Lord to be blessed, and to enjoy that blessedness even in the present life: we mean, such happiness as can be had before entering heaven, which, though certainly much below that of heaven, yet far surpasses all the pleasures of sense in this world: "And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts" (Phil. iv. 7); so wrote the Apostle to

his disciples But to gain this peace, even in the midst of affronts and calumnies, we must be dead in the Lord: a dead person, how much soever he may be ill-treated and trampled on by others, resents it not; in like manner, he who is meek, like a dead body, which no longer sees or feels, should endure all the outrages committed against him. Whoever loves Jesus Christ from his heart easily attains to this; because, as he is conformed in all things to His will, he accepts with equal composure and peace of mind prosperous and adverse occurrences, consolations and afflictions, injuries and courtesies. Such was the conduct of the Apostle; and he says, therefore: "I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. vii. 4). Oh, happy the man who reaches this point of virtue! he enjoys a continual peace, which is a treasure precious beyond all other goods of this world. St. Francis of Sales said: 'Of what value is the whole universe in comparison with peace of heart?' And, in truth, of what avail are all riches and all the honours of the world to a man that lives in disquiet, and whose heart is not at peace?

5. In short, in order to remain constantly united with Jesus Christ, we must do all with tranquillity, and not be troubled at any contradiction that we may encounter. "The Lord is not in the earthquake" (3 Kings xix. 11) The Lord does not abide in troubled hearts. Let us listen to the beautiful lessons given on this subject by that master of meekness St. Francis of Sales: 'Never put yourself in a passion, nor open the door to anger on any pretext whatever; because, when once it has gained an entrance, it is no longer in our power to banish it, or moderate it, when we wish to do so. The remedies against it are: 1. To check it immediately, by diverting the mind to some other object, and not to speak a word. 2. To imitate the Apostles when they beheld the tempest at sea, and to have recourse to God, to whom it belongs to restore peace to the soul. 3. If you feel that, owing to your weakness, anger has already got footing in your breast, in that case do yourself violence to regain your composure, and then try to make acts of humility and of sweetness towards the person against whom you are irri-

tated; but all this must be done with sweetness and without violence, for it is of the utmost importance not to irritate the wounds.' The saint said that he himself was obliged to labour much during his life to overcome two passions which predominated in him, namely, anger and love: to subdue the passion of anger, he avowed it had cost him twenty-two years' hard struggle. As to the passion of love, he had succeeded in changing its object, by leaving creatures, and turning all his affections to God. And in this manner the saint acquired so great an interior peace, that it was visible even in his exterior; for he was invariably seen with a serene countenance and a smile on his features.

6. "From whence are wars? . . . Are they not from your concupiscences?" (St. James iv. 1, 2.) When we are made angry by some contradiction, we fancy we shall find relief and quiet by giving vent to our anger in actions, or at least in words: but we are mistaken, it is not so; for after having done so, we shall find that we are much more disturbed than before. Whoever desires to persevere in uninterrupted peace, must beware of ever yielding to ill-humour. And whenever any one feels himself attacked by this ill-humour, he must do his utmost to banish it immediately; and he must not go to rest with it in his heart, but must divert himself from it by the perusal of some book, by singing some devout canticle, or by conversing on some pleasant subject with a friend. The Holy Spirit says: "Anger resteth in the bosom of a fool" (Ecclus. vii. 10). Anger remains a long time in the heart of fools, who have little love for Jesus Christ; but if by stealth it should ever enter into the hearts of the true lovers of Jesus Christ, it is quickly dislodged, and does not remain. A soul that cordially loves the Redeemer never feels in a bad humour, because, as she desires only what God desires, she has all she wishes for, and consequently is ever tranquil and well-balanced. The Divine will tranquillises her in every misfortune that occurs; and thus she is able at all times to observe meekness towards all. But we cannot acquire this meekness without a great love for Jesus Christ. In fact, we know by experience, that we are not meeker

and gentler towards others, except when we feel an increased tenderness towards Jesus Christ.

7. But since we cannot constantly experience this tenderness, we must prepare ourselves, in our mental prayer, to bear the crosses that may befall us. This was the practice of the saints; and so they were ever ready to receive with patience and meekness, injuries, blows, and chastisements. When we meet with an insult from our neighbour, unless we have frequently trained ourselves beforehand, we shall find it extremely difficult to know what course to take, in order not to yield to the force of anger; in the very moment, our passion will make it appear but reasonable for us to retort boldly the audacity of the person who affronts us; but St. John Chrysostom says, that it is not the right way to quench the fire which is raging in the mind of our neighbour by the fire of an indignant reply; to do so will only enkindle it the more: 'One fire is not extinguished by another.' Some one may say: But why should I use courtesy and gentleness towards an impertinent fellow, that insults me without cause? But St. Francis of Sales replies: 'We must practise meekness, not only with reason, but against reason.'

8. We must therefore endeavour, on such occasions, to make a kind answer; and in this way we shall allay the fire: "A mild answer breaketh wrath" (Prov. xv. 1). But when the mind is troubled, the best expedient will be to keep silence. St. Bernard writes: 'The eye troubled by anger sees not straight.'³¹ When the eye is dimmed with passion, it no longer distinguishes between what is and what is not unjust; anger is like a veil drawn over the eyes, so that we can no longer discern betwixt right and wrong; wherefore we must, like St. Francis of Sales, make a compact with our tongue: 'I have made a covenant with my tongue,' he wrote, 'never to speak while my heart is disturbed.'

9. But there are moments when it seems absolutely necessary to check insolence with severe words. David said: "Be angry, and sin not" (Ps. iv. 5). Occasions do exist, therefore, when we may be lawfully angry, provided it be without sin. But here is just the matter: specu-

latively speaking, it seems expedient at times to speak and reply to some people in terms of severity, in order to make an impression on them; but in practice it is very difficult to do this without some fault on our part; so that the sure way is always to admonish, or to reply, with gentleness, and to scrupulously guard against all resentment. St. Francis of Sales said: 'I have never been angry without afterwards repenting of it.' And when, for some reason or other, we still feel warm, the safest way, as I said before, is to keep silence, and reserve the remonstrance till a more convenient moment, when the heart is cooled down.

10. We ought particularly to observe this meekness when we are corrected by our superiors or friends. St. Francis of Sales again writes: 'To receive a reprimand willingly, shows that we love the virtue opposed to the fault for which we are corrected; and consequently this is a great sign of progress in perfection.' We must besides practise meekness towards ourselves. It is a delusion of the devil, to make us consider it a virtue to be angry with ourselves for committing some fault; far from it, it is a trick of the enemy to keep us in a state of trouble, that so we may be unfit for the performance of any good. St. Francis of Sales said: 'Hold for certain that all such thoughts as create disquiet are not from God, who is the Prince of peace, but proceed either from the devil, or from self love, or from the good opinion we have of ourselves. These are the three sources from which all our troubles spring. When, therefore, any thoughts arise which throw us into trouble, we must immediately reject and despise them.'

11. Meekness is also more especially necessary when we have to correct others. Corrections made with a bitter zeal often do more harm than good, especially when he who must be corrected is himself excited: in such cases the correction should be put off, and we must wait until he is cool. And we ourselves ought no less to refrain from correcting while we are under the influence of ill-temper; for then our admonition will always be accompanied with harshness; and the person in fault, when he sees that he is corrected in such a way, will take no heed of the admoni-

tion, considering it the mere effect of passion. This holds good as far as concerns the good of our neighbour; as concerns our personal advantage, let us show how dearly we love Jesus Christ, by patiently and gladly supporting every sort of ill-treatment, injury, and contempt.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my despised Jesus, O Love, O Joy of my soul, Thou hast by Thy example made contempt most acceptable to Thy lovers! I promise Thee, from this day forward, to submit to every affront for the love of Thee, who for love of me didst submit on earth to every species of revilement from men. Do Thou grant me strength to keep this promise. Enable me to know and to perform whatever Thou desirest at my hands. My God and my All, I crave no other good than Thyself, who art Infinite Good! O Thou who takest my interests so much to heart, grant that my only care may be to gratify Thee! Grant that all my thoughts may be occupied in avoiding whatever may offend Thee, and in promoting whatever may contribute to Thy good pleasure. Ward off every occasion that may draw me from Thy love. I strip myself of my liberty, and consecrate it entirely to Thy good will. I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O my Delight! O Word Incarnate, I love Thee more than myself! Take pity on me, and heal whatever wounds remain in my poor soul from her past disloyalties towards Thee. I resign myself wholly into Thy arms, O my Jesus; I will be wholly Thine; I will suffer every thing for love of Thee; and I ask of Thee nothing but Thyself! O Holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, I love you, and I rely on you; succour me by your powerful intercession!

CHAPTER XIII.

CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL, REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH WITH THE TRUTH.

He that loves Jesus Christ only wishes what Jesus Christ wishes.

1. CHARITY and truth always go together; so that charity, conscious that God is the only and the true Good, detests iniquity, which is directly opposed to the Divine will, and takes no satisfaction but in what pleases Almighty God. Hence the soul that loves God is heedless of what people say of her, and only aims at pleasing God. The Blessed Henry Suso said: 'That man stands well with God who strives to conform himself to the truth, and for the rest is utterly indifferant to the opinion or treatment of mankind.'

2. As we have already more than once asserted, the sanctity and perfection of a soul consists in renouncement of self and in submission to the will of God; but now it will be well to descend more into detail. If, then, we would become saints, our whole endeavour must be, never to follow our own will, but always the will of God; the substance of all the precepts and Divine counsels is comprised in doing and suffering what God wills, and in the manner He wills it: let us, therefore, entreat the Lord to bestow on us a holy liberty of spirit; liberty of spirit leads us to embrace whatever is pleasing to Jesus Christ, regardless of all feelings of repugnance arising from self-love and human respect. The love of Jesus Christ makes those who love Him utterly indifferant; so that all things are alike to them, whether bitter or sweet: they do not wish for any thing that pleases themselves, but only for that which is pleasing to God; they employ themselves in little and great things, be they pleasant or unpleasant, with the same peace of mind; it is enough for them if they please God.

3. St. Augustine says: '*Ama, et fac quod vis*: Love, and do what you like.' Whoever really loves God seeks only to please Him; and in this is all his pleasure. St. Teresa says: 'He that seeks but the gratification of one he loves, is gratified with all that pleases that person. Love in its per-

fection produces this result; it makes a person heedless of all private interests and self-satisfaction, and concentrates all his thoughts on endeavouring to please the person beloved, and to do all he can to honour him himself, and to make him honoured by others. O Lord, all our ills come from not keeping our eyes fixed on Thee! Were we solely intent on advancing, we should soon come to the end of our journey; but we fall and stumble a thousand times, and we even lose our way, for want of looking attentively to the right path.' Here we may see what should be the single aim of all our thoughts, actions, desires, and of all our prayers, namely, the pleasure of God; our way to perfection must be this, to walk according to the will of God.

4. God wishes us to love Him with our whole heart: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." That person loves Jesus Christ with his whole heart who says to Him with the Apostle: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Lord, signify to me what Thou wilt have me do; for I desire to perform all. And let us be persuaded that whilst we desire what God desires, we desire what is best for ourselves; for assuredly God only wishes what is best for us. St. Vincent of Paul said: 'Conformity with the will of God is the treasure of a Christian and the remedy for all evils; since it comprises abnegation of self and union with God and all virtues.' In this, then, is all perfection: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Jesus Christ promises us, "not a hair of your head shall perish" (Luke xxi. 18). Which is as much as to say, that the Lord rewards us for every good thought we have of pleasing Him, and for every tribulation embraced with patience in conformity to His holy will. St. Teresa said, 'The Lord never sends a trial, without remunerating it with some favour as often as we accept it with resignation.'

5. But our conformity to the Divine will must be entire, without any reserve, and constant without withdrawal. In this consists the height of perfection; and to this (I repeat) all our works, all our desires, and all our prayers ought to tend. Some souls given to prayer, on reading of the ecstasies and raptures of St. Teresa and St. Philip Neri, come to wish to enjoy themselves these super-

natural unions. Such wishes must be banished as contrary to humility ; if we really desire to be saints, we must aspire after true union with God, which is to unite our will entirely to the will of God. St. Teresa said, ‘Those persons are deceived who fancy that union with God consists in ecstasies, raptures, and sensible enjoyments of Him. It consists in nothing else than in submitting our will to the will of God ; and this submission is perfect when our will is detached from every thing, and so completely united with that of God, that all its movements depend solely on the will of God. This is the real and essential union which I have always sought after, and continually beg of the Lord. And then she adds : ‘Oh, how many of us say this, and seem to ourselves to desire nothing besides this ; but, miserable creatures that we are, how few of us attain to it !’ Such, indeed, is the undeniable truth ; many of us say : O Lord ! I give Thee my will, I desire nothing but what Thou desirest ; but, in the event of some trying occurrence, we are at a loss how to yield calmly to the Divine will. And this is the source of our continually complaining that we are unfortunate in the world, and that we are the butt of every misfortune ; and so of our dragging on an unhappy life.

6. If we were conformed to the Divine will in every trouble, we should undoubtedly become saints, and be the happiest of mankind. This, then, should form the chief object of our attention, to keep our will in unbroken union with the will of God in every occurrence of life, be it pleasant or unpleasant. It is the admonition of the Holy Spirit. “Winnow not with every wind” (Eccles. v. 11). Some people resemble the weathercocks, which turn about with every wind that blows ; if the wind is fair and favourable to their desires, they are all gladness and condescension ; but if there blow a contrary wind, and things fall out against their desires, they are all sadness and impatience ; this is why they do not become saints, and why their life is unhappy, because, in the present life, adversity will always befall us in a greater measure than prosperity. St. Dorotheus said, that to receive from the hands of God whatever happens is a great means to keep ourselves in

continual peace and tranquillity of soul. And the saint relates, that on this account the ancient fathers of the desert were never seen angry or melancholy, because they accepted whatever happened to them joyfully, as coming from the hands of God. Oh, happy the man who lives wholly united and abandoned to the Divine will! he is neither puffed up by success nor depressed by reverses; for he well knows that all alike comes from the self-same hand of God; the will of God is the single rule of his own will; thus he only does what God wishes him to do, and he only desires what God does. He is not anxious to do many things, but to accomplish with perfection what he knows to be acceptable to God. Accordingly, he prefers the minutest obligations of his state of life to the most glorious and important actions, well aware that in the latter self-love may find a great share, whereas in the former there is certainly the will of God.

7. Thus we, too, shall be happy when we receive from God all the dispositions of His Providence in the spirit of perfect conformity to His Divine will, utterly regardless whether or not they coincide with our private inclinations. The saintly Mother de Chantal said: 'When shall we come to relish the Divine will in every event that happens, without paying attention to any thing else but the good pleasure of God, from whom it is certain that prosperity and adversity proceed alike from motives of love and for our best interests? When shall we resign ourselves unreservedly into the arms of our most loving heavenly Father, intrusting Him with the care of our persons and our affairs, and reserving nothing for ourselves but the sole desire of pleasing God?' The friends of St. Vincent of Paul said of him while he was still on earth: 'Vincent is always Vincent.' By which they meant to say, that the saint was ever to be seen with the same smiling face, whether in prosperity or in adversity; and was always himself, because, as he lived in the total abandonment of himself to God, he feared nothing and desired nothing but what was pleasing to God. St. Teresa said: 'By this holy abandonment that admirable liberty of spirit is generated, which those who are perfect possess, wherein they

find all the happiness in this life which they can possibly desire ; inasmuch as, fearful of nothing, and desirous or wanting for nothing in the things of this world, they possess all.'

8. Many, on the other hand, fabricate a sort of sanctity according to their own inclinations ; some, inclined to melancholy, make sanctity consist in living in seclusion ; others, of a busy temperament, in preaching and in making up quarrels ; some, of an austere nature, in penitential afflictions and macerations ; others, who are naturally generous, in distributing alms ; some in saying many vocal prayers ; others in visiting sanctuaries ; and all their sanctity consists in such or the like practices. External acts are the fruit of the love of Jesus Christ ; but true love itself consists in a complete conformity to the will of God ; and as a consequence of this, in denying ourselves and in preferring what is most pleasing to God, and solely because He deserves it.

9. Others wish to serve God ; but it must be in that employment, in that place, with those companions, and in such circumstances ; or else they either neglect their duty, or at least do it with a bad grace : such as these are not free in spirit but are slaves of self-love, and on that account reap little merit even from what they perform ; moreover, they live in perpetual disquiet, since their attachment to self-will makes the yoke of Jesus Christ become heavy to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ love only that which is pleasing to Jesus Christ, and for the sole reason that it does please Him ; and they love it when it pleases Jesus Christ, where it pleases Him, and how it pleases Him ; whether He chooses to employ them in honourable functions, or in mean and lowly occupations ; in a life of notoriety in the world, or in one hidden and despised. This is the real drift of what is meant by the pure love of Jesus Christ ; hence we must labour to overcome the cravings of our self-love, which seeks to be employed in those works only that are glorious, or that are according to our own inclinations. And what will it profit us to be the most honoured, the most wealthy, the greatest in this world, without the will of God ? The Blessed Henry Suso said,

‘I would rather be the vilest insect on earth by the will of God, than a seraph in heaven by my own will.’

10. Jesus Christ said: “Many shall say: Lord, we have cast out devils and done great wonders in Thy name:” “Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name?” (Matt. vii. 22.) But the Lord will answer them: “I never knew you; depart from Me, you that work iniquity” (Matt. vii. 23). Depart from Me; I never acknowledged you for My disciples, because you preferred to follow your own inclinations rather than My will. And this is especially applicable to those priests who labour much for the salvation or perfection of others, while they themselves continue to live on in the mire of their imperfections. Perfection consists: *Firstly*, in a true contempt of oneself. *Secondly*, in a thorough mortification of our own appetites. *Thirdly*, in a perfect conformity to the will of God: who-soever is wanting in one of these virtues is out of the way of perfection. On this account a great servant of God said, it was better for us in our actions to have the will of God rather than His glory as their sole end; for, in doing the will of God, we at the same time promote His glory; whereas in proposing to ourselves the glory of God, we frequently deceive ourselves, and follow our own will under pretext of glorifying God. St. Francis of Sales said: ‘There are many who say to the Lord: I give myself wholly to Thee without reserve; but few indeed, in point of fact, practically embrace this abandonment. It consists in a certain indifference in accepting all kinds of events, just as they fall out according to the order of Divine Providence, afflictions as well as consolations, slights and injuries as well as honour and glory.’

11. It is therefore in suffering, and in embracing with cheerfulness whatever cuts against the grain of our own inclinations, that we can discover who is a true lover of Jesus Christ. Thomas à Kempis says, ‘that he is not deserving of the name of lover, who is not ready to endure all things for his beloved, and to follow in all things the will of his beloved.’ On the contrary, Father Balthazar Alvarez said, that whoever quietly resigns himself to

the Divine will in troubles 'travels to God post-haste. And the saintly Mother Teresa said : 'What greater acquisition can we make, than to have some proof that we are pleasing God?' And to this I add, that we cannot have a more certain proof of this, than by peacefully embracing the crosses which God sends us. We please God by thanking Him for His benefits on earth ; but, says Father John of Avila, one 'blessed be God' uttered in adversity is worth six thousand acts of thanksgiving in prosperity.

12. And here we must observe, that we must receive with resignation, not merely the crosses which come directly from God ; for instance, ill-health, scanty talents, accidental reverses of fortune ; but such, moreover, as come indirectly from God, and directly from our fellow-men ; for instance, persecutions, thefts, injuries ; for all, in reality, come from God. David was one day insulted by one of his vassals called Semei, who not only upbraided him with words of contumely, but even threw stones at him. One of the courtiers would have forthwith avenged the insult by cutting off the head of the offender ; but David replied : "Let him alone, and let him curse ; for the Lord hath bid him curse David" (2 Kings xvi. 10) ; or, in other words, God makes use of him to chastise me for my sins, and therefore He allowed him to pursue me with injuries.

13. Wherefore St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, that all our prayers should have for their end to obtain from God the grace to follow His holy will in all things. Certain souls, greedy of spiritual dainties in prayer, go in search only of these banquets of sweet and tender feelings ; but courageous souls, which seek sincerely to belong wholly to God, ask Him only for light to understand His will, and for strength to put it into execution. In order to attain to purity of love, it is necessary to submit our will in all things to the will of God : 'Never consider yourselves,' said St. Francis of Sales, 'to have arrived at the purity which you ought to have, as long as your will is not cheerfully obedient, even in things the most repulsive, to the will of God.' 'Because,' as St. Teresa remarks, 'the giving up of our will to God draws Him to unite Himself with our lowliness.' But this can never be obtained, except by

means of mental prayer and of continual petitions addressed to the Divine Majesty, nor without a cordial desire to belong entirely to Jesus Christ without reserve.

14. O most amiable Heart of my Divine Saviour, Heart enamoured of mankind, since Thou lovest us with such a depth of tenderness; O Heart, in fine, worthy to rule over and possess all our hearts, would that I could make all men comprehend the love Thou bearest them, and the tender caresses Thou dost lavish on those who love Thee without reserve! O Jesus my Love, be pleased to accept the offering and the sacrifice which I this day make to Thee of my entire will! Acquaint me with what Thou wouldst have me to do; for I am determined to do all by the help of Thy grace.

ON OBEDIENCE.

15. Now what is the surest way to know and ascertain what God requires of us? There is no surer way than to practise obedience to our superiors and directors. St. Vincent of Paul said: the will of God is never better complied with than when we obey our superiors. The Holy Ghost says: 'Much better is obedience than the victims of fools.' God is more pleased with the sacrifice which we make to Him of our own will, by submitting it to obedience, than with all other sacrifices which we can offer Him; because in other things, as in alms-deeds, fastings, mortifications, and the like, we give of what is ours to God, but in giving Him our will we present Him ourselves: when we give Him our goods, our mortifications, we give Him part; but when we give Him our will, we give Him every thing. So that when we say to God, O Lord, make me know by means of obedience what Thou requirest of me, for I wish to comply with all, we have nothing more to offer Him.

16. Whoever, therefore, gives himself up to obedience, must needs detach himself totally from his own opinion. 'What though each one,' says St. Francis of Sales, 'has his own opinions, virtue is not thereby violated; but virtue is violated by the attachment which we have to our own opinions' But, alas! this attachment is the hardest thing to part with; and hence there are so few persons wholly

given to God, because few render a thorough submission to obedience. There are some persons so fondly attached to their own opinion, that, on receiving an obedience, although the thing enjoined suit their inclination, yet, from the very fact of it being commanded, they lose all fancy for it, all wish to discharge it; for they find no relish in any thing but in following the dictates of their individual will. How different is the conduct of saints! their only happiness flows from the execution of what obedience imposes on them. The saintly Mother Jane de Chantal once told her daughters that they might spend the recreation-day in any manner they chose. When the evening came, they all went to her, to beg most earnestly that she would never again grant them such a permission; for they had never spent such a wearisome day as that on which they had been set free of obedience.

17. It is a delusion to think that any one can be possibly better employed than in the discharge of what obedience has imposed. St. Francis of Sales says: 'To desert an occupation given by obedience in order to unite ourselves with God by prayer, by reading, or by recollection, would be to withdraw from God to unite ourselves with our own self-love.' St. Teresa adds, moreover, that whoever performs any work, even though it be spiritual, yet against obedience, assuredly works by the instigation of the devil, and not by Divine inspiration, as he perhaps flatters himself; 'because,' says the saint, 'the inspirations of God always come in company with obedience.' To the same effect she says elsewhere: 'God requires nothing more of a soul that is determined to love Him than obedience.' 'A work done out of obedience,' says Father Rodriguez, 'outweighs every other that we can imagine.' To gather a straw off the ground from obedience is of greater merit than a protracted prayer, or a discipline to blood, done out of our own head. This caused St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to say, that she would rather be engaged in some exercise from obedience than in prayer; 'because,' said she, 'in obedience I am certain of the will of God, whereas I am by no means so certain of it in any other exercise.' According to all spiritual masters, it is

better to leave off any devout exercise through obedience, than to continue it without obedience. The Most Blessed Virgin Mary revealed once to St. Bridget, that he who relinquishes some mortification through obedience reaps a twofold profit ; since he has already obtained the merit of the mortification by the good-will to do it, and he also gains the merit of obedience by foregoing it. One day the famous Father Francis Arias went to see the Venerable Father John of Avila, his intimate friend, and he found him pensive and sad ; he asked him the reason of it, and received this answer : ‘ O happy you, who live under obedience, and are sure of doing the will of God. As for me, who shall warrant me whether I do a thing more pleasing to God in going from village to village, catechising the poor peasants, or in remaining stationary in the confessional, to hear every one that presents himself ? Whereas he that is living under obedience is always sure that whatever he performs by obedience is according to the will of God, or rather that it is what is most acceptable to God.’ Let this serve as a consolation for all those who live under obedience.

18. For obedience to be perfect, we must obey with the *will* and with the *judgment*. To obey with the *will* signifies to obey willingly, and not by constraint, after the fashion of slaves ; to obey with the *judgment* means to conform our judgment to that of the superior, without examining what is commanded. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi remarks on this : ‘ Perfect obedience demands a soul without judgment.’ To the like purpose, St. Philip Neri said that, in order to obey with perfection, it was not enough to execute the thing commanded, but it must be done without reasoning on it ; taking it for certain that what is commanded us is for us the most perfect thing we can do, although the opposite might be better before God.

19. This holds good not merely for religious, but likewise for seculars living under obedience to their spiritual directors. Let them request their director to prescribe them rules for the guidance of their affairs, both spiritual and temporal ; and so they will make sure of doing what is best. St. Philip Neri said : ‘ Let those who are de-

siours of progressing in the way of God submit themselves to a prudent confessor, whom they should obey as in God's place. By so doing, we are certain of not having to render an account to God of the actions we perform.' He said, moreover, 'that we must place faith in the confessor, because the Lord will not permit him to err; that nothing is so sure of cutting off all the snares of the devil as to do the will of others in the performance of good; and that there is nothing more dangerous than to wish to direct ourselves according to our private fancy.' In like manner, St. Francis of Sales says, in speaking of the direction of the spiritual father as a means of walking securely in the path of perfection, 'This is the maxim of all maxims.' 'Seek as you will,' says the devout Avila, 'you will never so surely find the will of God as in the way of this humble obedience, so much recommended and so practised by all the ancient servants of God.' The same thing is affirmed by St. Bernard, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Antoninus, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, John Gerson, and all theologians and masters of the spiritual life; and St. John of the Cross said, that to call this truth in question is almost to doubt of the Faith. The words of the saint are, 'not to be satisfied with what the confessor says, is arrogance, and a want of faith.'³² Among the maxims of St. Francis of Sales are the two following, most consolatory for scrupulous souls: 'Firstly, a truly obedient soul was never yet lost; secondly, we ought to be satisfied on being told by our spiritual director that we are going on well, without seeking to be convinced of it ourselves.' It is the teaching of many doctors, as of Gerson, St. Antoninus, Cajetan, Navarrus, Sanchez, Bonacina, Cordovius, Castropalao, and the doctors of Salamanca, with others, that the scrupulous person is bound, under strict obligation, to act in opposition to scruples, when from such scruples there is reason to apprehend grievous harm happening to soul or body, such as the loss of health, or of intellect; wherefore scrupulous persons ought to have greater scruple at not obeying the confessor than at acting in opposition to their scruples. To sum up, therefore, all that has been said in this chapter, our salvation and per-

fection consist : 1. In denying ourselves ; 2. In following the will of God ; 3. In praying Him always to give us strength to do both one and the other.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

“What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever” (Ps. lxxii. 26). My beloved Redeemer, infinitely amiable, since Thou hast come down from heaven to give Thyself wholly to me, what else shall I seek for on earth or in heaven besides Thee, who art the Sovereign Good, the only good worthy to be loved? Be Thou, then, the sole Lord of my heart, do Thou possess it entirely; may my soul love Thee alone, obey Thee alone, and seek to please no other than Thee. Let others enjoy the riches of this world, I wish only for Thee: Thou art and shalt ever be my treasure in this life and in eternity. Wherefore I give Thee, O my Jesus, my whole heart and all my will. It was at one time, alas! a rebel against Thee; but now I dedicate it wholly to Thee. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” Tell me what Thou requirest of me, and lend me Thy assistance; for I will leave nothing undone. Dispose of me, and of all that concerns me, as Thou pleasest; I accept of all and resign myself to all. Oh! Love deserving of infinite love, Thou hast loved me so as even to die for me; I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee more than myself, and into Thy hands I abandon my soul. On this very day I bid farewell to every worldly affection, I take leave of every thing created, and I give myself without reserve to Thee; through the merits of Thy Passion receive me, and make me faithful unto death. My Jesus, my Jesus, from this day forward I will live only for Thee, I will love none but Thee, I will seek nothing else than to do Thy blessed will. Aid me by Thy grace, and aid me, too, by your protection, O Mary my hope.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS.

He that loves Jesus Christ bears all things for Jesus Christ, and especially illnesses, poverty, and contempt.

1. IN Chapter the Fifth we spoke of the virtue of patience in general. In this we will speak of certain matters in particular, which demand the especial practice of patience. Father Balthazar Alvarez said, that a Christian need not imagine himself to have made any progress until he has succeeded in penetrating his heart with a lasting sense of the sorrows, poverty, and ignominies of Jesus Christ, so as to support with loving patience every sort of sorrow, privation, and contempt, for the sake of Jesus Christ. In the first place let us speak of bodily infirmities, which, when borne with patience, merit for us a beautiful crown. St. Vincent of Paul said: 'Did we but know how precious a treasure is contained in infirmities, we should accept of them with joy as the greatest possible blessings.' Hence the saint himself, though constantly afflicted with ailments, that often left him no rest day or night, bore them with so much peace and such serenity of countenance that no one could guess that he ailed any thing at all. Oh, how edifying is it to see a sick person bear his illness with a peaceful countenance, as did St. Francis of Sales! When he was ill, he simply explained his complaint to the physician, obeyed him exactly by taking the prescribed medicines, however nauseous; and for the rest he remained at peace, never uttering a single complaint in all his sufferings. What a contrast to this is the conduct of those who do nothing but complain even for the most trifling indisposition, and who would like to have around them all their relations and friends to sympathise with them! Far different was the instruction of St. Teresa to her nuns: 'My sisters, learn to suffer something for the love of Jesus Christ, without letting all the world know of it.' One Good Friday Jesus Christ favoured the Venerable Father Lewis da Ponte with so much bodily suffering, that no

part of him was exempt from its particular pain : he mentioned his severe sufferings to a friend ; but he was afterwards so sorry at having done so, that he made a vow never again to reveal to any body whatever he might afterwards suffer.

2. I say he was favoured ; for, to the saints, the illnesses and pains which God sends them are real favours. One day St. Francis of Assisi lay on his bed in excruciating torments ; a companion said to him : ‘ Father, beg God to ease your pains, and not to lay so heavy a hand upon you.’ On hearing this, the saint instantly leaped from his bed, and going on his knees, thanked God for his sufferings ; then, turning to his companion, he said : ‘ Listen, did I not know that you so spoke from simplicity, I would refuse ever to see you again.’

3. Some one that is sick will say, it is not so much the infirmity itself that afflicts me, as that it disables me from going to church to perform my devotions, to communicate, and to hear Holy Mass ; I cannot go to choir to recite the Divine Office with my brethren ; I cannot celebrate Mass ; I cannot pray ; for my head is aching with pain, and light almost to fainting. But tell me now, if you please, why do you wish to go to church or to choir ? why would you communicate and say or hear Holy Mass ? is it to please God ? but it is not now the pleasure of God that you say the Office, that you communicate or hear Mass ; but that you remain patiently on this bed, and support the pains of this infirmity. But you are displeased with my speaking thus ; then you are not seeking to do what is pleasing to God, but what is pleasing to yourself. The Venerable John of Avila wrote as follows to a priest who so complained to him : ‘ My friend, busy not yourself with what you would do if you were well, but be content to remain ill as long as God thinks fit. If you seek the will of God, what matters it to you whether you be well or ill ?’³³

4. You say you are unable even to pray, because your head is weak. Be it so : you cannot meditate ; but why cannot you make acts of resignation to the will of God ? If you would only make these acts, you could not make a better prayer, welcoming with love all the torments that

assail you. So did St. Vincent of Paul; when attacked by a serious illness, he was wont to keep himself tranquilly in the presence of God, without forcing his mind to dwell on any particular subject; his sole exercise was to elicit some short acts from time to time, as of love, of confidence, of thanksgiving, and more frequently of resignation, especially in the crisis of his sufferings. St. Francis of Sales made this remark: 'Considered in themselves, tribulations are terrifying; but considered in the will of God, they are lovely and delightful.' You cannot make prayer; and what more exquisite prayer than to cast a look from time to time on your crucified Lord, and to offer Him your pains, uniting the little that you endure with the overwhelming torments that afflicted Jesus on the cross!

5. There was a certain pious lady lying bed-ridden with many disorders; and on the servant putting the crucifix into her hand, and telling her to pray to God to deliver her from her miseries, she made answer: 'But how can you desire me to seek to descend from the cross, whilst I hold in my hand a God crucified? God forbid that I should do so. I will suffer for Him who chose to suffer torments for me incomparably greater than mine.' This was, indeed, precisely what Jesus Christ said to St. Teresa when she was labouring under serious illness; He appeared to her all covered with wounds, and then said to her: 'Behold, my daughter, the bitterness of my sufferings, and consider if yours equal Mine.' Hence the saint was accustomed to say in the midst of all her infirmities: 'When I remember in how many ways my Saviour suffered, though He was innocent itself, I know not how it could enter my head to complain of my sufferings.' During a period of thirty-eight years, St. Lidwina was afflicted with numberless evils—fevers, gout in the feet and hands, and sores, all her life-time; nevertheless, from never losing sight of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, she maintained an unbroken cheerfulness and joy. In like manner, St. Joseph of Leonessa, a Capuchin, when the surgeon was about to amputate his arm, and his brethren would have bound him, to prevent his stirring from vehemence of pain, seized hold of the crucifix and exclaimed: 'Wherefore bind me?—where-

fore bind me? behold who it is that binds me to support every suffering patiently for love of Him ;' and so he bore the operation without a murmur. St. Jonas the Martyr, after passing the entire night immersed in ice by order of the tyrant, declared next morning that he had never spent a happier night, because he had pictured to himself Jesus hanging on the cross ; and thus, compared with the torments of Jesus, his own had seemed rather caresses than torments.

6. Oh, what abundance of merits may be accumulated by patiently enduring illnesses ! Almighty God revealed to Father Balthazar Alvarez the great glory he had in store for a certain nun, who had borne a painful sickness with resignation ; and told him that she had acquired greater merit in those eight months of her illness than some other religious in many years. It is by the patient endurance of ill-health that we weave a great part, and perhaps the greater part, of the crown that God destines for us in heaven. St. Lidwina had a revelation to this effect. After sustaining many and most cruel disorders, as we mentioned above, she prayed to die a martyr for the love of Jesus Christ ; now as she was one day sighing after this martyrdom, she suddenly saw a beautiful crown, but still incomplete, and she understood that it was destined for herself ; whereupon the saint, longing to behold it completed, entreated the Lord to increase her sufferings. Her prayer was heard, for some soldiers came shortly after, and ill-treated her, not only with injurious words, but with blows and outrages. An angel then appeared to her with the crown completed, and informed her that those last injuries had added to it the gems that were wanting ; and shortly afterwards she expired.

7. Ah, yes ! to the hearts that fervently love Jesus Christ, pains and ignominies are most delightful. And thus we see the holy martyrs going with gladness to encounter the sharp prongs and hooks of iron, the plates of glowing steel and axes. The Martyr St. Procopius thus spoke to the tyrant who tortured him : ' Torment me as you like ; but know at the same time, that nothing is sweeter to the lover of Jesus Christ than to suffer for His sake.' St. Gordiano,

Martyr, replied in the same way to the tyrant who threatened him death : ‘Thou threatenest me with death ; but I am only sorry that I cannot die more than once for my own beloved Jesus.’ And I ask, did these saints speak thus because they were insensible to pain or weak in intellect ? No, replies St. Bernard ; not insensibility, but love caused this, *Hoc non fecit stupor, sed amor*. They were not insensible, for they felt well enough the torments inflicted on them ; but since they loved God, they esteemed it a great privilege to suffer for God, and to lose all, even life itself, for the love of God.

8. Above all, in time of sickness we should be ready to accept of death, and of that death which God pleases. We must die, and our life must finish in our last illness ; neither do we know which will be our last illness. Wherefore in every illness we must be prepared to accept that death which God has appointed for us. A sick person says : ‘Yes ; but I have committed many sins, and have done no penance. I should like to live, not for the sake of living, but to make some satisfaction to God before my death.’ But tell me, my brother, how do you know that if you live longer you will do penance, and not rather do worse than before ? At present you can well cherish the hope that God has pardoned you ; what penance can be more satisfactory than to accept of death with resignation, if God so wills it ? St. Aloysius Gonzaga, at the age of twenty-three, gladly embraced death with this reflection : ‘At present,’ he said, ‘I am, as I hope, in the grace of God. Hereafter, I know not what may befall me ; so that I now die contentedly, if God calls me to the next life.’ It was the opinion of Father John of Avila that every one, provided he be in good dispositions, though only moderately good, should desire death, to escape the danger, which always surrounds us in this world, of possibly sinning and losing the grace of God.

9. Besides, owing to our natural frailty, we cannot live in this world without committing at least venial sins ; this should be a motive for us to embrace death willingly, that we may never offend God any more. Further, if we truly love God, we should ardently long to go to see Him, and love Him with all our strength in Paradise, which no one

can do perfectly in this present life ; but unless death open us the door, we cannot enter that blessed region of love. This caused St. Augustine, that loving soul, to cry out : ‘ Oh, let me die, Lord, that I may behold Thee ! ’ O Lord, let me die, otherwise I cannot behold and love Thee face to face.

10. In the second place, we must practise patience in the endurance of poverty. Our patience is certainly very much tried when we are in need of temporal goods. St. Augustine said : ‘ He that has not God, has nothing ; he that has God, has all. ’ He who possesses God, and remains united to His blessed will, finds every good. Witness St. Francis, barefooted, clad in sack-cloth, and deprived of all things, yet happier than all the monarchs of the world, by simply repeating, *Deus meus et omnia* : My God and my all. A poor man is properly he that has not what he desires ; but he that desires nothing, and is contented with his poverty, is in fact very rich. Of such St. Paul says : “ Having nothing, yet possessing all things ” (2 Cor. vi. 10). The true lovers of God have nothing, and yet have every thing ; since, when temporal goods fail them, they exclaim : ‘ My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me ; ’ and with this they rest satisfied. Not only did the saints maintain patience in poverty, but sought to be despoiled of all, in order to live detached from all, and united with God alone. If we have not courage enough to renounce all worldly goods, at all events let us be contented with that state of life in which God has placed us ; let our solicitude be not for earthly goods, but for those of Paradise, which are immeasurably greater, and last for ever ; and let us be fully persuaded of what St. Teresa says : ‘ The less we have here, the more we shall have there. ’

11. St. Bonaventure said that temporal goods were nothing more than a sort of bird-lime to hinder the soul from flying to God. And St. John Climacus said, that poverty, on the contrary, is a path which leads to God free of all hindrances. Our Lord Himself said : “ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ” (St. Matt. v. 3). In the other Beatitudes, the heaven of the life to come is promised to the meek and to the clean of heart ;

but to the poor, heaven (that is heavenly joy) is promised even in this life; "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Yes, for even in the present life the poor enjoy a foretaste of paradise. By the poor in spirit are meant those who are not merely poor in earthly goods, but who do not so much as desire them; who, having enough to clothe and feed them, live contented, according to the advice of the Apostle: "But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content" (1 Tim. vi. 8). Oh, blessed poverty, (exclaimed St. Laurence Justinian) which possesses nothing and fears nothing; she is ever joyous and ever in abundance, since she turns every inconvenience into advantage for the soul. St. Bernard said: 'The avaricious man hungers after earthly things as a beggar, the poor man despises them as a lord.'³⁴ The miser is always hungry as a beggar, because he is never satiated with the possessions he desires; the poor man, on the contrary, despises them all as a rich lord, inasmuch as he desires nothing.

12. One day Jesus Christ thus spoke to the Blessed Angela of Foligno: 'If poverty were not of great excellence, I would not have chosen it for Myself, nor have bequeathed it to my Elect.' And, in fact, the saints, seeing Jesus poor, had therefore a great affection for poverty. St. Paul says, that the desire of growing rich is a snare of Satan, by which he has wrought the ruin of innumerable souls: "They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. vi. 9). Unhappy beings who, for the sake of vile creatures of earth, forfeit an infinite good, which is God! St. Basil the Martyr was quite in the right, when the Emperor Licinius proposed to make him the chief among his priests, if he would renounce Jesus Christ; he was right, I say, to reply: 'Tell the emperor, that were he to give me his whole kingdom, he would not give me as much as he would rob me of, by depriving me of God.' Let us be content then with God, and with those things which He gives us, rejoicing in our poverty, when we stand in need of something we desire, and have it not; for herein consists our merit. 'Not poverty,' says St. Bernard, 'but the

love of poverty, is reckoned a virtue.'³⁵ Many are poor, but from not loving their poverty, they merit nothing ; therefore St. Bernard says, that the virtue of poverty consists not in being poor, but in the love of poverty.

13. This love of poverty should be especially practised by religious who have made the vow of poverty. 'Many religious,' says the same St. Bernard, 'wish to be poor ; but on the condition of wanting for nothing.'³⁶ 'Thus,' says St. Francis of Sales, 'they wish for the honour of poverty, but not the inconveniences of poverty.' To such persons is applicable the saying of the Blessed Solomea, a nun of St. Clare : 'That religious shall be a laughing-stock to angels and to men, who pretends to be poor, and yet murmurs when she is in want of something.' Good religious act differently ; they love their poverty above all riches. The daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II., a discalced nun of St. Clare, called Sister Margaret of the Cross, appeared on one occasion before her brother, the Archduke Albert, in a patched-up habit, who evinced some astonishment at it, as if it were unbecoming her noble birth ; but she made him this answer : 'My brother, I am more content with this torn garment than all monarchs with their purple robes.' St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said : 'O happy religious ! who, detached from all by means of holy poverty, can say, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance." My God, Thou art my portion and all my good.' St. Teresa, having received a large alms from a certain merchant, sent him word that his name was written in the Book of Life ; and that, in token of this, he should lose all his possessions : and the merchant actually failed, and remained in poverty till death. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said, that there could be no surer sign of a person's being numbered among the elect, than to see him fearing God, and at the same time undergoing crosses and tribulations in this life.

14. The bereavement of relations and friends by death belongs also, in some measure, to holy poverty ; and in this we must especially practise patience. Some people, at the loss of a parent or friend, can find no rest ; they shut themselves up to weep in their chamber, and giving

free vent to their sorrow, become insupportable to all around them, by their want of patience. I would ask these persons, for whose gratification they thus lament and shed tears? For that of God? Certainly not; for God's will is, that they should be resigned to His dispensations. For that of the soul departed? By no means: if the soul be lost, she abhors both you and your tears; if she be saved, and already in heaven, she would have you thank God on her part; if still in purgatory, she craves the help of your prayers, and wishes you to bow with resignation to the Divine will, and to become a saint, in order that she may one day enjoy your society in paradise. Of what use, then, is all this weeping? On one occasion, the Venerable Father Joseph Caracciolo, the Theatine, was surrounded by his relations, who were all bitterly lamenting the death of his brother, whereupon he said to them: 'Come, come! let us keep these tears for a better purpose, to weep over the death of Jesus Christ, who has been to us a father, a brother, and spouse, and who died for love of us.' On such occasions we must imitate Job, who, on hearing the news of the death of his sons, exclaimed, with full resignation to the Divine will, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;" God gave me my sons, and God hath taken them away. "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord;" it hath pleased God that such things should happen, and so it pleaseth me; wherefore may He be blessed by me for ever.

15. In the third place, we must practise patience, and show our love to God, by tranquilly submitting to contempt. As soon as a soul delivers herself up to God, He sends her from Himself, or through others, insults and persecution. One day, an angel appeared to the Blessed Henry Suso, and said to him, 'Henry, thou hast hitherto mortified thyself in thy own way; henceforth thou shalt be mortified after the pleasure of others.' On the day following, as he was looking from a window on the street, he saw a dog shaking and tearing a rag which it held in its mouth; at the same moment, a voice said to him, 'So hast thou to be torn in the mouths of men.' Forthwith the Blessed Henry descended into the street and secured

the rag, putting it by to encourage him in his coming trials.

16. Affronts and injuries were the delicacies the saints earnestly longed and sought for. St. Philip Neri, during the space of thirty years, had to put up with much ill-treatment in the house of St. Jerome at Rome ; but on this very account he refused to leave it, and resisted all the invitations of his sons to come and live with them in the new Oratory, founded by himself, till he received an express command from the Pope to do so. St. John of the Cross was prescribed change of air for an illness which eventually carried him to the grave ; now, he could have selected a more commodious convent, of which the prior was particularly attached to him ; but he chose instead a poor convent, whose prior was his enemy, and who, in fact, for a long time, and almost up to his dying day, spoke ill of him, and abused him in many ways, and even prohibited the other monks from visiting him. Here we see how the saints even sought to be despised. St. Teresa wrote this admirable maxim : ‘ Whoever aspires to perfection must beware of ever saying, *They had no reason to treat me so.* If you will not bear any cross but one which is founded on reason, then perfection is not for you.’ Whilst St. Peter Martyr was complaining in prison of being confined unjustly, he received that celebrated answer from the Crucifix : our Lord said to him, ‘ And what evil have I done, that I suffer and die on this cross for men ?’ Oh, what consolation do the saints derive in all their tribulations from the ignominies which Jesus Christ endured ! St. Eleazar, on being asked by his wife how he contrived to bear with so much patience the many injuries which he had to sustain, and that even from his own servants, replied : ‘ I turn my looks on the outraged Jesus, and I discover immediately that my affronts are a mere nothing in comparison of what He suffered for my sake ; and thus God gives me strength to support all patiently.’ In fine, affronts, poverty, torments, and all tribulations, serve only to estrange further from God the soul that does not love Him ; whereas, when they befall a soul in love with God, they become an instrument of closer union and more ar-

dent love of God: "Many waters cannot quench charity" (Cant. viii. 7). However great and grievous troubles may be, so far from extinguishing the flames of charity, they only serve to enkindle them the more in a soul that loves nothing else but God.

17. But wherefore does Almighty God load us with so many crosses, and take pleasure in seeing us afflicted, reviled, persecuted, and ill-treated by the world? Is He, perchance, a tyrant, whose cruel disposition makes Him rejoice in our suffering? No: God is by no means a tyrant, nor cruel; He is all compassion and love towards us; suffice it to say, that He has died for us. He indeed does rejoice at our suffering, but for our good; inasmuch as by suffering here, we are released hereafter from the debt of torments justly due from us to His Divine justice; He rejoices in them, because they detach us from the sensual pleasures of this world: when a mother would wean her child, she puts gall on the breast, in order to create a disgust in the child; He rejoices in them, because we give Him, by our patience and resignation in bearing them, a token of our love; in fine, He rejoices in them, because they contribute to our increase of glory in heaven. Such are the reasons for which the Almighty, in His compassion and love towards us, is pleased at our suffering.

18. Let us now draw this chapter to a conclusion. That we may be able to practise patience to advantage in all our tribulations, we must be fully persuaded that every trial comes from the hands of God, either directly, or indirectly through men; we must therefore render God thanks whenever we are beset with sorrows, and accept, with gladness of heart, of every event, prosperous or adverse, that proceeds from Him, knowing that all happens by His disposition for our welfare: "To them that love God all things work together unto good" (Rom. viii. 28). In addition to this, it is well in our tribulations to glance a moment at that hell which we have formerly deserved: for assuredly all the pains of this life are incomparably smaller than the awful pains of hell. But above all, prayer, by which we gain the Divine assistance, is the great means to suffer patiently all affliction, scorn, and contradictions;

and is that which will furnish us with the strength which we have not of ourselves. The saints were persuaded of this; they recommended themselves to God, and so overcame every kind of torments and persecutions.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Lord, I am fully persuaded that without suffering, and suffering with patience, I cannot win the crown of Paradise. David said: "*Ab Ipso patientia mea* : From Him is my patience" (Ps. lxi. 6). And I say the same; my patience in suffering must come from Thee. I make many purposes to accept in peace of all tribulations; but no sooner are they at hand, than I grow sad and alarmed; and if I suffer, I suffer without merit and without love, because I know not how to suffer them so as to please Thee. O my Jesus, through the merits of Thy patience in bearing so many afflictions for love of me, grant me the grace to bear crosses for the love of Thee! I love Thee with my whole heart, O my dear Redeemer! I love Thee, my Sovereign Good! I love Thee, my own Love, worthy of infinite love. I am grieved at any displeasure I have ever caused Thee, more than for any evil whatever. I promise Thee to receive with patience all the trials Thou mayest send me; but I look to Thee for help to be faithful to my promise, and especially to be enabled to bear in peace the throes of my last agony and death. O Mary, my Queen, vouchsafe to obtain for me a true resignation in all the anguish and trials that await me in life and death!

CHAPTER XV.

CHARITY BELIEVETH ALL THINGS.

He that loves Jesus Christ believes all His words.

1. WHOEVER loves a person, believes all that proceeds from the lips of that person; consequently, the more a soul loves Jesus Christ, the more lively and unshaken is her faith. When the good thief beheld our Redeemer

though He had done no ill, suffering death upon the cross with such patience, he began at once to love Him ; under the influence of this love, and of the Divine light which then broke upon his soul, he believed that this was truly the Son of God, and begged not to be forgotten by Him when He should have passed into His kingdom.

2. Faith is the foundation of charity ; but faith afterwards receives her perfection from charity. His faith is most perfect whose love of God is most perfect. Charity produces in man not merely the faith of the understanding, but the faith of the will also : those who believe only with the understanding, but not with the will, as is the case with sinners who are perfectly convinced of the truths of the Faith, but do not choose to live according to the Divine commandments,—such as these have a very weak faith ; for had they a more lively belief that the grace of God is a priceless treasure, and that sin, because it robs us of this grace, is the worst of evils, they would assuredly change their lives. If, then, they prefer the miserable creatures of this earth to God, it is because they either do not believe, or because their faith is very weak. On the contrary, he who believes not only with the understanding, but also with the will, so that he not only believes, but has the will to believe in God, the Revealer of truth, from the love he has for Him, and rejoices in so believing,—such a one has a perfect faith, and consequently seeks to make his life conformable to the truths that he believes.

3. Weakness of faith, however, in those who live in sin, does not spring from the obscurity of faith ; for though God, in order to make our faith more meritorious, has veiled the objects of faith in darkness and secrecy, He has at the same time given us such clear and convincing evidence of their truth, that not to believe them would argue not merely a lack of sense, but sheer madness and impiety. The weakness of the faith of many persons is to be traced to their wickedness of living. He who, rather than forego the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures, scorns the Divine friendship, would wish there were no law to forbid, and no chastisement to punish, his sin ; on this account, he strives

to blind himself to the eternal truths of death, judgment, and hell, and of Divine justice ; and because such subjects strike too much terror into his heart, and are too apt to mix bitterness in his cup of pleasure, he sets his brain to work to discover proofs, which have at least the look of plausibility ; and by which he allows himself to be flattered into the persuasion that there is neither soul, nor God, nor hell, in order that he may live and die like the brute beasts, without laws and without reason.

4. And this, namely, laxity of morals, is the source whence have issued, and still issue daily, so many books and systems of Materialists, Indifferentists, Politicists, Deists, and Naturalists ; some among them deny the Divine Existence, and some the Divine Providence, saying that God, after having created men, takes no further notice of them, and is heedless whether they love or hate Him, whether they be saved or lost ; others, again, deny the goodness of God, and maintain that He has created numberless souls for hell, becoming Himself their tempter to sin, that so they may damn themselves, and go into everlasting fire, to curse Him there for ever.

5. Oh, ingratitude and wickedness of men ! God has created them in His mercy, to make them eternally happy in heaven ; He has poured on them so many lights, benefits, and graces, to bring them to eternal life ; for the same end He has redeemed them at the price of so many sorrows and sufferings ; and yet they strive to deny all, that they may give free rein to their vicious inclinations ! But no : let them strive as they will, the unhappy beings cannot wrest themselves from remorse of conscience, and the dread of the Divine vengeance. On this subject I have latterly published a work, entitled *The Truth of Faith*, in which I have clearly shown the inconsistency of all these systems of modern unbelievers. Oh, if they would but once forsake sin, and apply themselves earnestly to the love of Jesus Christ, they would then most certainly cast away all doubts about things of faith, and firmly believe all the truths that God has revealed !

6. The true lover of Jesus Christ keeps the eternal

truths constantly in view, and orders all his actions according to them. Oh, how thoroughly does he who loves Jesus Christ understand the force of that saying of the Wise Man, "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity;" that all earthly greatness is mere smoke, dirt, and delusion; that the soul's only welfare and happiness consist in loving her Creator, and in doing His blessed will; that we are, in reality, no more than what we are before God; that it is of no use to gain the whole world, if the soul be lost; that all the goods in the world can never satisfy the human heart, but only God Himself; and, in fine, that we must leave all in order to gain all.

7. "Charity believeth all things." There are other Christians,—though not so perverse as the class we have mentioned, who would fain believe in nothing, that they may give full scope to their unruly passions, and live on undisturbed by the stings of remorse,—there are others, I say, who believe indeed, but their faith is languid; they believe the most holy mysteries of religion, the truths of Revelation contained in the Gospel, the Trinity, the Redemption, the holy Sacraments, and the rest; still they do not believe all. Jesus Christ has said: "Blessed are the poor; blessed are the sorrowful; blessed are the mortified; blessed are those whom men persecute, calumniate, and curse." "Blessed are the poor" (St. Luke vi. 20); "blessed are they that hunger;" "blessed are they that suffer persecution;" "blessed are you when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you" (St. Matt. v. 5, 6, 10, 11). This is the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. How, then, can it be said, that those believe in the Gospel who say: 'Blessed are those who have money; blessed are those who suffer nothing; blessed are those who can take their amusements; pitiable is the man that suffers persecution and ill-treatment from others?' We must certainly say of such as these, that either they do not believe the Gospel, or that they only believe a part of it. He who believes it all esteems it his highest fortune, and a mark of the Divine favour in this world, to be poor, to be sick, to be mortified, to be despised and ill-treated

by men. Such is the belief, and such the language, of one who believes all that is said in the Gospel, and has a real love for Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My beloved Redeemer, O Life of my soul, I firmly believe that Thou art the only Good worthy of being loved. I believe that Thou art the greatest Lover of my soul, since through love alone Thou didst die, overwhelmed with sorrows for love of me. I believe there is no greater blessing in this world, or in the next, than to love Thee, and to do Thy adorable will. All this I believe most firmly; so that I renounce all things, that I may belong wholly to Thee, and that I may possess Thee alone. Help me, through the merits of Thy sacred Passion, and make me such as Thou wouldst have me to be. I believe in Thee, O Infallible Truth! I trust in Thee, O Infinite Mercy! I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness! O Infinite Love, I give myself wholly to Thee, who hast wholly given Thyself to me in Thy Passion, and in the holy Sacrament of the Altar; and I recommend myself to you, O Mary, refuge of sinners, and Mother of God!

CHAPTER XVI.

CHARITY HOPETH ALL THINGS.

He that loves Jesus Christ hopes for all things from Him.

1. HOPE increases charity, and charity increases hope. Hope in the Divine goodness undoubtedly gives an increase to our love of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas says, that in the very moment when we hope to receive some benefit from a person, we begin also to love him.³⁷ On this account, the Lord forbids us to put our trust in creatures: "Put not your trust in princes" (Ps. cxlv. 2). Further, He pronounces a curse on those who do so: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man" (Jer. xviii. 5). God does not wish

us to trust in creatures, because He does not wish us to fix our love upon them. Hence St. Vincent of Paul said : 'Let us beware of reposing too much confidence in men ; for when God beholds us thus leaning on them for support, He Himself withdraws from us. On the other hand, the more we trust in God, the more we shall advance in His holy love : ' "I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart" (Ps. cxviii. 32). Oh, how rapidly does that soul advance in perfection, who has her heart dilated with confidence in God ! She flies rather than runs ; for by making God the foundation of all her hope, she flings aside her own weakness, and borrows the strength of God Himself, which is communicated to all who place their confidence in Him : "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Is. xl. 31). The eagle is the bird that soars nearest the sun ; in like manner, the soul that has God for her trust becomes detached from the earth, and more and more united to God by love.

2. Now as hope increases the love of God, so does love help to increase hope ; for charity makes us the adopted sons of God. In the natural order we are the work of His hands ; but in the supernatural order we are made sons of God, and partakers of the Divine nature, through the merits of Jesus Christ ; as the Apostle St. Peter writes : "That by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature" (2 St. Peter i. 4). And if charity makes us the sons of God, it consequently makes us heirs of heaven, according to St. Paul : "And if sons, heirs also" (Rom. viii. 17). Now a son claims the right of abiding under the paternal roof ; an heir is entitled to the property ; and thus charity increases the hope of Paradise : so that the souls that love God cry out incessantly, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy kingdom come !'

3. Moreover, God loves those who love Him : "I love them that love Me" (Prov. viii. 17). He showers down His graces on those that seek Him by love : "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lament. iii. 25). Consequently, the soul that loves God most has the **greatest**

hope in His goodness. This confidence produces that imperturbable tranquillity in the saints which makes them always joyful and full of peace, even amid the severest trials ; for their love of Jesus Christ, and their persuasion of His liberality towards those who love Him, leads them to trust solely in Him ; and thus they find a lasting repose. The sacred spouse abounded with delights, because she loved none but her Spouse, and leaned entirely on Him for support ; she was full of contentments, since she well knew how generous her Beloved is towards all that love Him ; so that of her it is written : “ Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved ? ” (Cant. viii. 5.) These words of the Wise Man are most true : “ All good things come to me together with her ” (Wisd. vii. 11). With charity, all blessings are introduced into the soul.

4. The primary object of Christian hope is God, whom the soul enjoys in the kingdom of heaven. But we must not suppose that the hope of enjoying God in Paradise is any obstacle to charity ; since the hope of Paradise is inseparably connected with charity, which there receives its full and complete perfection. Charity is that infinite treasure, spoken of by the Wise Man, which makes us the friends of God : “ An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God ” (Wisd. vii. 14). The angelic Doctor St. Thomas says,³⁸ that friendship is founded on the mutual communication of goods ; for as friendship is nothing more than a mutual love between friends, it follows that there must be a reciprocal interchange of the good which each possesses. Hence the saint says : ‘ If there be no communication, there is no friendship.’ On this account Jesus Christ says to His disciples : “ I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you ” (St. John xv. 15). Since He had made them His friends, He had communicated all His secrets to them.

5. St. Francis of Sales says : ‘ If, by a supposition of what is impossible, there could be an infinite good (that is a God) to whom we belonged in no way whatever, and with whom we could have no union or communication, we should

certainly esteem Him more than ourselves ; so that we **might** feel great desire of being able to love Him ; but we should not actually love Him, because love is built upon union ; for love is a friendship, and the foundation of friendship is to have things in common ; and its end is union.' Thus St. Thomas teaches us that charity does not exclude the desire of the reward prepared for us in heaven by Almighty God ; on the contrary, it makes us look to it as the chief object of our love, for such is God, who constitutes the bliss of Paradise ; for friendship implies, that friends mutually rejoice in one another.³⁹

6. The Spouse in the Canticles refers to this reciprocal interchange of goods, when she says : ' My Beloved to me and I to Him ' (Cant. ii. 16). In heaven the soul belongs wholly to God, and God belongs wholly to the soul, according to the measure of her capacity and of her merits. But from the persuasion which the soul has of her own nothingness in comparison with the infinite attractions of Almighty God, and aware consequently that the claims of God on her love are beyond measure greater than her own can be on the love of God, she is therefore more anxious to procure the Divine pleasure than her own enjoyment ; so that she is more gratified by the pleasure which she affords Almighty God by giving herself entirely to Him, than by God's giving Himself entirely to her ; but at the same time she is delighted when God thus gives Himself to her, inasmuch as she is thereby animated to give herself up to God with a greater intensity of love. She indeed rejoices at the glory which God imparts to her, but for the sole purpose of referring it back to God Himself, and of thus doing her utmost to increase the Divine glory. At the sight of God in heaven the soul cannot help loving Him with all her strength ; on the other hand, God cannot hate any one that loves Him : but if (supposing what is impossible) God could hate a soul that loves Him, and if a beatified soul could exist without loving God, she would much rather endure all the pains of hell, on condition of being allowed to love God as much as He should hate her, than to live without loving God, even though she could enjoy all the other delights of Paradise. So it is ; for that conviction which

the soul has of God's boundless claims upon her love gives her a greater desire to love God than to be loved by Him.

7. "Charity hopeth all things." St. Thomas, with the Master of the Sentences, defines Christian hope to be a 'sure expectation of eternal happiness.' Its certainty arises from the infallible promise of God to give eternal life to His faithful servants. Now charity, by taking away sin, at the same time takes away all obstacles to our obtaining the happiness of the Blessed; hence the greater our charity, the greater also and firmer is our hope: hope, on the other hand, can in no way interfere with the purity of love, because, according to the observation of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, love tends naturally to union with the object beloved; or, as St. Augustine asserts in stronger terms, love itself is like a chain of gold, that links together the hearts of the lover and the loved. 'Love is as it were a kind of bond uniting two together.' And as this union can never be effected at a distance, the person that loves always longs for the presence of the object of his love. The Sacred Spouse languished in the absence of her Beloved, and entreated her companions to acquaint Him with her sorrow, that He might come and console her with His presence: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love" (Cant. v. 8). A soul that loves Jesus Christ exceedingly cannot but desire and hope, as long as she remains on earth, to go without delay and be united to her beloved Lord in heaven.

8. Thus we see that the desire to go and see God in heaven, not so much for the delight which we shall experience in loving God, as for the pleasure which we shall afford God by loving Him, is pure and perfect love. Neither is the joy of the blessed in heaven any hinderance to the purity of their love; such joy is inseparable from their love; but they take far more satisfaction in their love of God than in the joy that it affords them. Some one will perhaps say: but the desire of a reward is rather a love of concupiscence than a love of friendship. We must therefore make a distinction between temporal rewards promised by

men, and the eternal rewards of paradise promised by God to those who love Him: the rewards given by man are distinct from, and independent of, their own persons, since they do not bestow themselves, but only their goods, when they would remunerate others; on the contrary, the principal reward which God gives to the blessed is the gift of Himself: "I am thy reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv. 1). Hence to desire heaven is the same thing as to desire God, who is our last end.

9. I wish here to propose a doubt, which may rise in the mind of one who loves God, and strives to conform himself in all things to His blessed will. If it should be ever revealed to such an one that he would be eternally lost, would he be obliged to bow to it with resignation, in order to practise conformity with the will of God? St. Thomas says no; and further, that he would sin by consenting to it, because he would be consenting to live in a state that involves sin, and is contrary to the last end for which God created him; for God did not create souls to hate Him in hell, but to love Him in heaven: so that He does not wish the death even of the sinner, but that all should be converted and saved. The holy Doctor says, that God wishes no one to be damned except through sin; and therefore, a person, by consenting to his damnation, would not be acting in conformity with the will of God, but with the will of sin.⁴⁰ But suppose that God, foreseeing the sin of a person, should have decreed his damnation, and that this decree should be revealed to him, would he be bound to coincide in it? In the same passage the saint says, by no means; because such a revelation must not be taken as an irrevocable decree, but made merely *by way of communication*, as a threat of what would follow if he persists in sin.

10. But let every one banish such baneful thoughts from his mind, as only calculated to cool his confidence and love. Let us love Jesus Christ as much as possible here below; let us always be sighing to go hence, and to behold Him in paradise, that we may there love Him perfectly; let us make it the grand object of all our hopes, to go thither to love Him with all our strength. We are commanded even in this life to love God with our whole strength: "Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength" (St. Luke x. 27); but the angelical Doctor says that man cannot perfectly fulfil this precept upon earth; only Jesus Christ, who was both God and man, and the most holy Mary, who was full of grace and free from original sin, perfectly fulfilled it. But we miserable children of Adam, infected as we are with sin, cannot love God without some imperfection; and it is in heaven alone, when we shall see God face to face, that we shall love Him, nay more, that we shall be necessitated to love Him with all our strength.

11. Behold, then, the scope of all our desires and aspirations, of all our thoughts and ardent hopes; to go and enjoy God in heaven, in order to love Him with all our strength, and to rejoice in the enjoyment of God. The blessed certainly rejoice in their own felicity in that kingdom of delights; but the chief source of their happiness, and that which absorbs all the rest, is to know that their beloved Lord possesses an infinite happiness; for they love God incomparably more than themselves. Each one of the blessed has such a love for him, that he would willingly forfeit all happiness, and undergo the most cruel torments, rather than that God should lose (if it were possible for Him to lose) one, even the least particle of His happiness. Hence the sight of God's infinite happiness, and the knowledge that it can never suffer diminution for all eternity, constitutes his paradise. This is the meaning of what our Lord says to every soul on whom He bestows the possession of eternal glory: "Enter into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21). It is not the joy that enters into the blessed soul, but the soul that enters into the joy of God, since the joy of God is the object of the joy of the blessed. Thus the good of God will be the good of the blessed; the riches of God will be their riches, and the happiness of God will be their happiness.

12. On the instant that a soul enters heaven, and sees by the light of glory the infinite beauty of God face to face, she is at once seized and all consumed with love. The happy soul is then as it were lost and immersed in that boundless ocean of the goodness of God. Then it is that

she quite forgets herself, and, inebriated with Divine love, thinks only of loving her God : "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy House" (Ps. xxxv. 9). As an intoxicated person no longer thinks of himself, so a soul in bliss can only think of loving and affording delight to her beloved Lord ; she desires to possess Him entirely, and she does in fact possess Him, without fear of losing Him any more ; she desires to give herself wholly to Him at every moment, and she does indeed possess Him, for every moment she offers herself to God without reserve, and God receives her in His loving embraces, and so holds her, and shall hold her in the same fond embraces for all eternity.

13. In this manner the soul is wholly united to God in heaven, and loves Him with all her strength ; her love is most perfect and complete, and though necessarily finite, since a creature is not capable of infinite love, it nevertheless renders her perfectly happy and contented, so that she desires nothing more. On the other hand, Almighty God communicates Himself, and unites Himself wholly to the soul, filling her with Himself proportionately to her merits ; and this union is not merely by means only of His gifts, lights, and loving attractions, as is the case during the present life, but by His own very essence. As fire penetrates iron, and seems to change it into itself, so does God penetrate the soul and fill her with Himself ; and though she never loses her own being, yet she becomes so penetrated and absorbed by that immense ocean of the Divine substance, that she remains, as it were, annihilated, and as if she ceased to exist. The Apostle prayed for this happy lot for his disciples when he said : "That you may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 19).

14. And this is the last end, which the goodness of God has appointed for us in the life to come. Hence the soul can never enjoy perfect repose on earth ; because it is only in heaven that she can obtain perfect union with God. It is true that the lovers of Jesus Christ find peace in the practice of perfect conformity with the will of God ; but they cannot in this life find complete repose ; this is only obtained when our last end is obtained ; that is, when we see God face to face, and are consumed

with His Divine love; and as long as the soul does not reach this end, she is ill at ease, and groans and sighs, saying: "Benold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter" (Is. xxxviii. 17).

15. Yes, O my God, I live in peace in this valley of tears, because such is Thy will; but I cannot help feeling unspeakable bitterness at finding myself at a distance from Thee, and not yet perfectly united with Thee, who art my centre, my all, and the fulness of my repose! For this reason the saints, though they were all inflamed with the love of God, did nothing but sigh after paradise. David cried out: "Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!" (Ps. cxviii. 5.) "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear" (Ps. xvi. 15). St. Paul said of himself: "Having a desire to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). St. Francis of Assisi said:

"I look for such a meed of bliss,
That all my pain seems happiness."

These were all so many acts of perfect charity. The angelic Doctor teaches us, that the highest degree of charity which a soul can reach upon earth, is to desire intensely to go and be united with God, and to enjoy Him in heaven.⁴¹ But, as we have already seen, this enjoyment of God in heaven does not consist so much in the fruition of the delights there lavished on her by Almighty God, as in the pleasure she takes in the happiness of God Himself, whom she loves incomparably more than herself.

16. The holy souls in purgatory feel no pain more acutely than that of their yearning to possess God, from whom they remain still at a distance. And this sort of pain will afflict those especially who in their lifetime had but little desire of paradise. Cardinal Bellarmine also says, that there is a certain place in purgatory called *carcer honoratus*, or prison of honour, where certain souls are not tormented with any pain of sense, but merely with the pain of privation of the sight of God; examples of this are related by St. Gregory, Venerable Bede, St. Vincent Ferrer, and St. Bridget; and this punishment is not for the commission of sin, but for coldness in desiring heaven.

Many souls aspire to perfection ; but for the rest, they are too indifferent whether they go to enjoy the sight of God, or continue on earth. But eternal life is an inestimable good, that has been purchased by the death of Jesus Christ; and God punishes such souls as have been remiss during life in their desires to obtain it.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God, my Creator and my Redeemer, Thou hast created me for heaven ; Thou hast redeemed me from hell to bring me into heaven ; and I have so many times, in Thy very face, renounced my claim to heaven by my sins, and have remained contented in seeing myself doomed to hell ! But blessed for ever be Thy infinite mercy, which, I would fain hope, has pardoned me, and many a time rescued me from perdition. Ah, my Jesus, would that I had never offended Thee ! would that I had always loved Thee ! I am glad that at least I have still time to do so. I love Thee ! O Love of my soul, I love Thee with my whole heart ; I love Thee more than myself ! I see plainly that Thou wishest to save me, that I may be able to love Thee for all eternity in that kingdom of love. I thank Thee, and beseech Thee to help me for the remainder of my life, in which I wish to love Thee most ardently, that I may ardently love Thee in eternity. Ah, my Jesus, when will the day arrive that shall free me from all danger of losing Thee, that shall consume me with love, by unveiling before my eyes Thy infinite beauty, so that I shall be under the necessity of loving Thee ? Oh, sweet necessity ! oh, happy and dear and most desired necessity, which shall relieve me from all fear of evermore displeasing Thee, and shall oblige me to love Thee with all my strength ! My conscience alarms me, and says : ‘ How canst Thou presume to enter heaven ? ’ But, my dearest Redeemer, Thy merits are all my hope. O Mary, Queen of Heaven, your intercession is all-powerful with God, in you I put my trust !

CHAPTER XVII.

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS.

He that loves Jesus Christ with a strong love, does not cease to love Him in the midst of all sorts of temptations and desolations.

1. It is not the pains of poverty, of sickness, of dishonour and persecution, which in this life most afflict the souls that love God, but temptations and desolations of spirit. Whilst a soul is in the enjoyment of the loving presence of God, she is so far from grieving at all the afflictions and ignominies and outrages of men, that she is rather comforted by them, as they afford her an opportunity of showing God a token of her love; they serve, in short, as fuel to enkindle her love more and more. But to find herself solicited by temptations to forfeit the Divine grace, or in the hour of desolation to apprehend having already lost it, oh, these are torments too cruel to bear for one who loves Jesus Christ with all her heart! However, the same love supplies her with strength to endure all patiently, and to pursue the way of perfection, on which she has entered. And, oh, what progress do those souls make by means of these trials, which God is pleased to send them in order to prove their love!

§ 1. OF TEMPTATIONS.

2. Temptations are the most grievous trials that can happen to a soul that loves Jesus Christ; she accepts with resignation of every other evil, as calculated only to bind her in closer union with God; but temptations to commit sin would drive her, as we said above, to a separation from Jesus Christ; and on this account they are more intolerable to her than all other afflictions. We must know, however, that although no temptation to evil can ever come from God, but only from the devil or our own corrupt inclinations: "for God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man" (St. James i. 13); nevertheless, God does at times permit his most cherished souls to be the

most grievously tempted. And in the first place, in order that from temptations the soul may better learn her own weakness, and the need she has of the Divine assistance not to fall. Whilst a soul is favoured with heavenly consolations, she feels as if she were able to vanquish every assault of the enemy, and to achieve every undertaking for the glory of God. But when she is strongly tempted, and is almost reeling on the edge of the precipice, and just ready to fall, then she becomes better acquainted with her own misery and with her inability to resist, if God did not come to her rescue. So it fared with St. Paul, who tells us, that God had suffered him to be troubled with a temptation to sensual pleasure, in order to keep him humble after the revelations with which God had favoured him: "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me" (2 Cor. xii. 7).

3. Besides, God permits temptations with a view to detach us more thoroughly from this life; and to kindle in us the desire to go and behold Him in heaven. Hence pious souls, finding themselves attacked day and night by so many enemies, come at length to feel a loathing for life, and exclaim: "Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!" (Ps. cxix. 5). And they sigh for the moment when they can say: "The snare is broken and we are delivered" (Ps. exxiii. 7). The soul would willingly wing her flight to God; but as long as she lives upon this earth she is bound by a snare which detains her here below, where she is continually assailed with temptations; this snare is only broken by death: so that the souls that love God sigh for death, which will deliver them from all danger of losing Him.

4. Almighty God, moreover, allows us to be tempted, to make us richer in merits; as it was said to Tobias: "And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptations should prove thee" (Tobias xii. 13). Thus a soul need not imagine herself out of God's favour because she is tempted, but should make it rather a motive of hope that God loves her. It is a delusion of the devil to lead some pusillanimous persons to suppose that tempta-

tions are sins that contaminate the soul. It is not bad thoughts that make us lose God, but the consenting to them; let the suggestions of the devil be ever so violent, let those filthy imaginations which overload our minds be ever so lively, they cannot cast the least stain on our souls, provided only we yield no consent to them; on the contrary, they make the soul purer, stronger, and dearer to Almighty God. St. Bernard says, that every time we overcome a temptation we win a fresh crown in heaven: 'As often as we conquer, so often are we crowned.' An angel once appeared to a Cistercian monk, and put a crown into his hands, with orders that he should carry it to one of his fellow-religious, as a reward for the temptation that he had lately overcome. Neither must we be disturbed if evil thoughts do not forthwith disappear from our minds, but continue obstinately to persecute us; it is enough if we detest them, and do our best to banish them.

5. God is faithful, says the apostle: He will not allow us to be tempted above our strength: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). Thus a person, so far from losing any thing by temptations, derives great profit from them. On this account God frequently allows the souls dearest to Him to undergo the severest temptations, that they may turn them into a source of greater merit on earth, and of greater glory in heaven. Stagnant water soon grows putrid; a soul left at ease, without any struggle or temptation, stands in great danger of perishing from some self-conceit of her own merit; she perhaps imagines herself to have already attained to perfection, and therefore has little fear; and consequently takes little pains to recommend herself to God and to secure her salvation; but when, on the contrary, she is agitated by temptations, and sees herself in danger of rushing headlong into sin, then she has recourse to God; she goes to the Divine Mother; she renews her resolution rather to die than to sin; she humbles herself, and casts herself into the arms of the Divine mercy: in this manner,

as experience shows us, the soul acquires fresh strength and closer union with God.

6. This must not, however, lead us to seek after temptations; on the contrary, we must pray to God to deliver us from temptations, and from those more especially by which God foresees we should be overcome; and this is precisely the object of that petition of the Our Father, "Lead us not into temptation;" but when, by God's permission, we are beset with temptations, we must then, without either being alarmed or discouraged by those foul thoughts, rely wholly on Jesus Christ, and beseech Him to help us; and He, on His part, will not fail to give us the strength to resist. St. Augustine says: 'Throw thyself on Him, and fear not; He will not withdraw to let Thee fall.'⁴²

7. Let us come now to the means which we have to employ in order to vanquish temptations. Spiritual masters prescribe a variety of means; but the most necessary, and the safest (of which only I will here speak), is to have immediate recourse to God with all humility and confidence, saying: 'Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me!' This short prayer will enable us to overcome the assaults of all the devils of hell; for God is infinitely more powerful than all of them. Almighty God knows well that of ourselves we are unable to resist the temptations of the infernal powers; and on this account the most learned Cardinal Gotti remarks, 'that whenever we are assailed, and in danger of being overcome, God is obliged to give us strength enough to resist as often as we call upon Him for it.'⁴³

8. And how can we doubt of receiving help from Jesus Christ, after all the promises which He has made us in the Holy Scriptures? "Come to Me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28). Come to Me, ye who are wearied in fighting against temptations, and I will restore your strength. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt honour Me" (Ps. xlix. 15). When thou seest thyself troubled by thine enemies, call upon Me, and I will bring thee out of the danger, and thou shalt praise Me.

Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear : thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am" (Is. lviii. 9). Then shalt thou call upon the Lord for help, and He will hear thee : thou shalt cry out, Quick, O Lord, help me ! and He will say to thee, Behold, here I am ; I am present to help thee. " Who hath called upon Him, and He despised him ?" (Eccles. ii. 12.) And who, says the prophet, has ever called upon God, and God has despised him without giving him help ? David felt sure of never falling a prey to his enemies, whilst he could have recourse to prayer ; he says : " Praising, I will call upon the Lord : and I shall be saved from my enemies" (Ps. xvii. 4). For he well knew that God is close to all who invoke His aid : " The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him" (Ps. cxliv. 18). And St. Paul adds, that the Lord is by no means sparing, but lavish of graces towards all that pray to Him : " Rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12).

9. Oh, would to God that all men would have recourse to Him whenever they are tempted to offend Him ; they would then certainly never commit sin ! They unhappily fall, because, led away by the cravings of their vicious appetites, they prefer to lose God, the Sovereign Good, than to forego their wretched short-lived pleasures. Experience gives us manifest proofs that whoever calls on God in temptation does not fall ; and whoever fails to call on Him as surely falls : and this is especially true of temptations to impurity. Solomon himself said that he knew very well he could not be chaste, unless God gave him the grace to be so ; and he therefore invoked Him by prayer in the moment of temptation : " And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him" (Wisd. viii. 21). In temptations against purity (and the same holds good with regard to those against faith), we must take it as a rule never to stay and combat the temptation hand to hand ; but we must endeavour immediately to get rid of it indirectly by making a good act of the love of God or of sorrow for our sins, or else by applying ourselves to some indifferent occupation calculated to distract us. On the very instant that we discover a thought of evil tendency, we must disown it imme-

diately, and (so to speak) close the door in its face, and deny it all entrance into the mind, without tarrying in the least to examine its object or errand. We must cast away these foul suggestions as quickly as we would shake off a hot spark from the fire.

10. If the impure temptation has already forced its way into the mind, and plainly pictures its object to the imagination, so as to stir the passions, then, according to the advice of St. Jerome, we must burst forth into these words: 'O Lord, Thou art my helper.'⁴⁴ As soon, says the saint, as we feel the sting of concupiscence, we must have recourse to God, and say: 'O Lord, do Thou assist me;' we must invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, which possess a wonderful efficacy in the suppression of temptations of this nature. St. Francis of Sales says, that no sooner do children espy a wolf, than they instantly seek refuge in the arms of their father and mother; and there they remain out of all danger: our conduct must be the same; we must flee without delay for succour to Jesus and Mary, by earnestly calling upon them. I repeat that we must instantly have recourse to them, without giving a moment's audience to, or disputing with, the temptation. It is related in the 4th paragraph of the *Book of Sentences of the Fathers*, that one day St. Pacomius heard the devil boasting that he had frequently got the better of a certain monk on account of his lending ear to him, and not turning instantly to call upon God. He heard another devil, on the contrary, utter this complaint: As for me, I can do nothing with my monk, because he never fails to have recourse to God, and always defeats me.

11. Should the temptation, however, obstinately persist in attacking us, let us beware of becoming troubled or angry at it; for this might put it in the power of our enemy to overcome us. We must, on such occasions, make an act of humble resignation to the will of God, who thinks fit to allow us to be tormented by these abominable temptations; and we must say: O Lord, I deserve to be molested with these filthy suggestions, in punishment of my past sins; but Thou must help to free

me. And as long as the temptation lasts, let us never cease calling on Jesus and Mary. It is also very profitable, in the like importunity of temptations, to renew our firm purpose to God of suffering every torment, and a thousand deaths, rather than offend Him; and at the same time we must invoke His Divine assistance. And even should the temptation be of such violence as to put us in imminent risk of consenting to it, we must then redouble our prayers, hasten into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, cast ourselves at the feet of the crucifix, or of some image of our Blessed Lady, and there pray with increased fervour, and cry out for help with groans and tears. God is certainly ready to hear all who pray to Him; and it is from Him alone, and not from our own exertions, that we must look for strength to resist; but sometimes Almighty God wills these struggles of us, and then He makes up for our weakness, and grants us the victory.

12. It is an excellent practice also, in the moment of temptation, to make the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast. It is also of great service to discover the temptation to our spiritual director. St. Philip Neri used to say, that a temptation disclosed is half overcome. Here it will be well to remark, what is unanimously admitted by all theologians, even of the rigorist school, that persons who have during a considerable period of time been leading a virtuous life, and live habitually in the fear of God, whenever they are in doubt, and are not certain whether they have given consent to a grievous sin, ought to be perfectly assured that they have not lost the Divine grace; for it is morally impossible that the will, confirmed in her good purposes for a considerable lapse of time, should on a sudden undergo such a total change as at once to consent to a mortal sin without clearly knowing it; the reason of it is, that mortal sin is so horrible a monster that it cannot possibly enter a soul by which it has long been held in abhorrence, without her being fully aware of it. We have proved this at length in our Moral Theology.⁴⁵ St. Teresa said: No one is lost without knowing it; and no one is deceived without the will to be deceived.

13 Wherefore, with regard to certain souls of delicate

conscience, and solidly rooted in virtue, but at the same time timid and molested with temptations (especially if they be against faith or chastity), the director will find it sometimes expedient to forbid them to discover them or make any mention of them; because, if they have to mention them, they are led to consider how such thoughts got entrance into their minds, and whether they paused to dispute with them, or took any complacency in them, or gave any consent to them; and so, by this too great reflection, those evil imaginations make a still deeper impression on their minds, and disturb them the more. Whenever the confessor is morally certain that the penitent has not consented to these suggestions, the best way is to forbid him to speak any more about them. And I find that St. Jane de Chantal acted precisely in this manner. She relates of herself, that she was for several years assailed by the most violent storms of temptation, but had never spoken of them in confession, since she was not conscious of having ever yielded to them; and in this she had only followed faithfully the rule received from her director. She says, 'I never had a full conviction of having consented;' these words give us to understand that the temptations did produce in her some agitation from scruples; but in spite of these, she resumed her tranquillity on the strength of the obedience imposed by her confessor, not to confess similar doubts. With this exception, it will be generally found an admirable means of quelling the violence of temptations to lay them open to our director, as we have said above.

14. But I repeat again, the most efficacious and the most necessary of all remedies against temptations, is that remedy of all remedies, namely, to pray to God for help, and to continue praying as long as the temptation continues. Almighty God will frequently have decreed success, not to the first prayer, but to the second, third, or fourth. In short, we must be thoroughly persuaded that all our welfare depends on prayer: our change of life depends on prayer; our victory over temptations depends on prayer; on prayer depends our obtaining Divine love, together with perfection, perseverance, and eternal salvation.

15. There may be some who, after the perusal of my spiritual works, will accuse me of tediousness in so often recommending the importance and necessity of having continual recourse to God by prayer. But I seem to myself to have said not too much, but far too little. I know that day and night we are all assailed with temptations from the infernal powers, and that Satan lets slip no occasion of causing us to fall. I know that, without the Divine help, we have not strength to repel the assaults of the devils; and that therefore the Apostle exhorts us to put on the armour of God: "Put you on the armour of God. that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness" (Eph. vi. 11, 12). And what is this armour with which St. Paul warns us to clothe ourselves in order to conquer our enemies? Behold of what it consists: "By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit, and in the same watching with all instance" (Eph. vi. 18). This armour is constant and fervent prayer to God, that He may help us to gain the victory. I know, moreover, that in every page of the Holy Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, we are repeatedly admonished to pray: "Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee" (Ps. xlix. 15). "Cry to Me, and I will hear thee" (Jer. xxxiii. 3). We ought always to pray, and not to faint" (St. Luke xviii. 1). "Ask, and you shall receive" (St. Matt. vii. 7). "Watch and pray" (St. John iv. 2). "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17). So that I think, far from having spoken too much on prayer, I have not said enough.

16. I would urge it on all preachers, to recommend nothing so much to their audience as prayer; on confessors, to insist on nothing so earnestly with their penitents as prayer; on spiritual writers, to treat on no subject more copiously than on prayer. But it is a source of grief to my heart, and it seems to me a chastisement of our sins, that so many preachers, confessors, and authors speak so little of prayer. There is no doubt that sermons, meditations, communions, and mortifications are great helps in

the spiritual life ; but if we fail to call upon God by **prayer** in the moment of temptation, we shall fall, in spite of all the sermons, meditations, communions, penances, and virtuous resolutions. If, then, we really wish to be saved, let us always pray, and commend ourselves to Jesus Christ, and most of all when we are tempted ; and let us not only pray for the grace of holy perseverance, but at the same time for the grace to pray always. Let us, likewise, take care to recommend ourselves to the Divine Mother, who, as St. Bernard says, is the dispenser of graces : ‘ Let us seek for graces, and let us seek them through Mary.’ For the same saint assures us that it is the will of God, that not a single grace should be dealt to us except through the hands of Mary : ‘ God has willed us to receive nothing that has not passed through the hands of Mary.’

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O Jesus, my Redeemer, I trust in Thy blood, that Thou hast forgiven me all my offences against Thee ; and I fondly hope to come one day to bless Thee for it eternally in heaven : ‘ The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.’ I plainly see now that I have over and over again fallen in times past, from the want of entreating Thee for holy perseverance. I earnestly beg Thee at this present moment to grant me perseverance : ‘ Never suffer me to be separated from Thee.’ And I purpose to make this prayer to Thee always ; but especially when I am tempted to offend Thee. I indeed make this resolution and promise ; but what will it profit me thus to resolve and promise, if Thou dost not give me the grace to run and cast myself at Thy feet ? By the merits, then, of Thy Sacred Passion, oh, grant me this grace, in all my necessities to have recourse to Thee. O Mary, my Queen and my Mother, I beseech you, by your tender love for Jesus Christ, to procure me the grace of always fleeing for succour, as long as I live, to your blessed Son and to you.

§ 2. ON DESOLATIONS.

17. St. Francis of Sales says : ‘ It is a mistake to estimate devotion by the consolations which we feel. True

devotion in the way of God consists in having a determined will to execute all that is pleasing to God.' Almighty God is wont to make use of aridities in order to draw closer to Him His most cherished souls. Attachment to our own inordinate inclinations is the greatest obstacle to true union with God; and when, therefore, God intends to draw a soul to His perfect love, He endeavours to detach her from all affection to created goods. Thus His first care is to deprive her of temporal goods, of worldly pleasures, of property, honours, friends, relations, and bodily health; by the like means of losses, troubles, neglects, bereavements, and infirmities, He extirpates by degrees all earthly attachment, in order that the affections may be set on Him alone.

18. With a view to produce a fondness for spiritual things, He regales the soul at first with great consolations, with an abundance of tears and tenderness; she is thus easily weaned from the gratifications of sense, and seeks further to mortify herself with works of penance, fasts, *cilices*, and disciplines; at this stage the director must keep a check on her, and not allow her to practise mortifications—at least not all those for which she asks permission—because, under the spur of this sensible devotion, a soul might easily ruin her health by indiscretion. It is a subtle artifice of the devil, when he beholds a person giving himself up to God, and receiving the consolations and caresses which God generally gives to beginners, to do his utmost to plunge him into the performance of immoderate penances, so as utterly to destroy his health; so that afterwards, by reason of bodily weakness, he not only gives up the mortifications, but prayer, communion, and all exercises of devotion, and eventually sinks back into his old way of living. On this account, the director should be very sparing in allowing mortifications to those who are only just entering upon the spiritual life, and who desire to practise bodily mortifications; let him exhort them to practise rather interior mortification, by bearing patiently with affronts and contradictions, by obedience to superiors, by bridling the curiosity to see, to hear, and the like; and let him tell them, that when they have acquired the good habit of practising these

interior mortifications, they will then be sufficiently perfect to proceed to the external ones. For the rest, it is a serious error to say, as some say, that external mortifications are of little or no use. Without doubt, interior mortification is most requisite for perfection; but it does not follow from this that external mortifications are unnecessary. St. Vincent of Paul declared, that the person who did not practise external mortifications would be neither mortified interiorly nor exteriorly. And St. John of the Cross declared, that the director who despised external mortifications was unworthy of confidence, even though he should work miracles.

19. But to come back to our point. The soul then, in the commencement of her conversion to God, tastes the sweetness of those sensible consolations with which God seeks to allure her, and by them to wean her from earthly pleasures; she breaks off her attachment to creatures, and becomes attached to God. Still, her attachment is imperfect, inasmuch as it is fostered more by that sensibility of spiritual consolations than by the real wish to do what is pleasing to God; and she deceives herself by believing that the greater the pleasure she feels in her devotions, the more she loves Almighty God. The consequence of this is, that if this food of spiritual consolations is stopped, by her being taken from her ordinary exercises of devotion, and employed in other works of obedience, charity, or duties of her state, she is disturbed, and takes it greatly to heart: and this is a universal defect in our miserable human nature, to seek our own satisfaction in all that we do. Or again, when she no longer finds this sweet relish of devotion in her exercises, she either forsakes them, or lessens them; and continuing to lessen them from day to day, she at length omits them entirely. And this misfortune befalls many souls who, when called by Almighty God to love Him, enter upon the way of perfection, and as long as spiritual sweetness lasts, make a certain progress; but alas! when this is no longer tasted, they leave off all, and resume their former ways. But it is of the highest importance to be fully persuaded that the love of God and perfection do not consist in feelings of tenderness and consolation, but in overcoming

self-love, and in following the Divine will. St. Francis of Sales says : ' God is as worthy of our love when He afflicts us as when He consoles us.'

20. Amid these consolations, it requires no remarkable degree of virtue to forego sensual delights, and to endure affronts and contradictions. The soul in the midst of these sweetnesses can endure all things; but this endurance comes far more frequently from those sensible consolations than from the strength of true love of God. On this account the Lord, with a view to give her a solid foundation in virtue, retires from her, and deprives her of that sensible devotion, that He may rid her of all attachment to self-love, which was fed by such consolations. And hence it happens, that whereas formerly she felt a joy in making acts of offering, of confidence, and love, now that the vein of consolations is dried up, she makes these acts with coldness and painful effort; and finds a weariness in the most pious exercises, in her prayers, spiritual readings, and communions; she even finds in them nothing but darkness and fears, and all seems lost to her. She prays and prays again, and is overwhelmed with sadness, because God seems to have abandoned her.

21. Let us come now to the practice of what we are to do on our parts in the like circumstances. When Almighty God in His mercy deigns to console us with His loving visitations, and to let us feel the presence of His grace, it is not good to reject the Divine consolations, as some false mystics advise: let us thankfully receive them; but let us beware of settling down on them, and seeking delight in those feelings of spiritual tenderness. St. John of the Cross calls this a 'spiritual gluttony,' which is faulty and displeasing to God. Let us strive in such moments to banish from our mind the sensible enjoyment of these sweetnesses: and let us be especially on our guard against supposing that these favours are a token of our standing better with God than others; for such a thought of vanity would oblige God to withdraw Himself from us altogether, and to leave us in our miseries. We must certainly at such times return most fervent thanks to God, because such spiritual consolations are signal gifts of the Divine bounty to our souls, far greater

than all the riches and honours of this world ; but let us not seek then to regale ourselves on these sensible sweetnesses, but let us rather humble ourselves by the remembrance of the sins of our past life. For the rest, we must consider this loving treatment as the pure result of the goodness of God ; and that perhaps it is sent as the forerunner of some great tribulation soon to befall us, in order that we may be strengthened by these consolations to endure all with patience and resignation. We should, therefore, take the occasion of offering ourselves to suffer every pain, internal or external, that may happen to us,—every illness, every persecution, every spiritual desolation, saying : O my Lord, I am here before Thee ; do with me, and with all that belongs to me, whatever Thou wilt ; grant me the grace to love Thee and perfectly to accomplish Thy holy will, and I ask no more !

22. When a soul is morally certain of being in the grace of God, although she may be deprived of worldly pleasures, as well as of those which come from God, she nevertheless rests satisfied with her state, conscious, as she is, of loving God, and of being loved by Him. But God, who wishes to see her purified and divested of all sensible satisfaction, in order to unite her entirely to Himself by means of pure love, what does He do ? He puts her in the crucible of desolation, which is more painful to bear than the most severe trials, whether internal or external ; she is left in a state of uncertainty if she be in the grace of God or not, and in the dense darkness that shrouds her, there seems no prospect of her evermore finding God. Almighty God, moreover, will sometimes permit her to be assailed by violent sensual temptations, accompanied by irregular movements of the inferior part, or perhaps by thoughts of unbelief, of despair, and even of hatred of God, when she imagines herself cast off by Him, and that He no longer hears her prayers. And as, on the one hand, the suggestions of the devil are vehement, and the motions of concupiscence are excited, and, on the other, the soul finds herself in this great darkness, she can no longer sufficiently distinguish whether she properly resists or yields to the temptations, though her will resolutely refuses all consent.

Her fears of having lost God are thus very much increased; and from her fancied infidelity in struggling against the temptations, she thinks herself deservedly abandoned by God. The saddest of all calamities seems to have befallen her,—to be able no longer to love God, and to be hated by Him. St. Teresa passed through all these trials, and declares, that during them solitude had no charms for her, but, on the contrary, filled her with horror; while prayer was changed for her into a perfect hell.

23. When a soul that loves God finds herself in this state, she must not lose courage; and neither must he who directs her become alarmed. Those sensual movements, those temptations against faith, those feelings of distrust, and those attacks which urge her to hate Almighty God, are fears, are tortures of the soul, are efforts of the enemy; but they are not voluntary, and therefore they are not sins. The sincere lover of Jesus Christ resists valiantly on such occasions, and withholds all consent to such suggestions; but because of the darkness which envelopes her, she knows not how to distinguish, her soul is thrown into confusion, and the privation of the presence of Divine grace makes her fearful and sad. But it can be soon discovered that in these souls, thus tried by God, all is dread and apprehension, but not truth: only ask them, even in their state of desolation, whether they would willingly commit one single deliberate venial sin; they will reply, that they are ready to suffer not one, but a thousand deaths, rather than be guilty of such displeasure to Almighty God.

24. It is necessary, therefore, to make this distinction, that it is one thing to perform an act of virtue, such as to repel a temptation, to trust in God, to love God, and to will what He wills; and it is another thing to have the consciousness of really making these good acts. This consciousness of doing good contributes to our pleasure; but the profit consists in the first point, that is, in actually doing good. With the first God is satisfied, and deprives the soul of the latter; that is, of the consciousness of doing good, in order thus to remove from her all self-satisfaction, which adds nothing to the merit of the action; for our Lord seeks more our real advantage than our own satisfaction. St.

John of the Cross wrote the following words of comfort to a desolate soul : ' You were never in a better state than at present ; for you were never so deeply humbled, and so cut off from all attachment to this world, and at the same time you were never so thoroughly impressed with the conviction of your own wickedness. Neither were you ever so divested and purified of all self-seeking as now.' Let us, then, not believe that when we feel a greater tenderness of devotion we are more beloved by God ; for perfection does not consist in that, but in the mortification of our own will, and in its union with the will of God.

25. Wherefore, in this state of desolation the soul must not heed the devil, when he suggests that God has abandoned her ; nor must she leave off prayer. This is the object at which the devil is aiming, in order afterwards to drag her down some precipice. St. Teresa writes : ' The Lord proves His true lovers by dryness and temptations. What though the dryness should be of live-long duration, let the soul never relax in prayer ; the time will arrive when all will be abundantly repaid.' In such a state of suffering, a person should humble himself by the reflection that his offences against God are undeserving of any milder treatment : he should humble himself, and be fully resigned to the Divine will, saying : O my Lord, behold me at Thy feet ; if it be Thy will that I should remain thus desolate and afflicted for my whole life, and even for all eternity, only grant me Thy grace and the gift of Thy love, and do with me whatever thou wilt.

26. It will be useless then, and perhaps a source of greater disquiet, to wish to assure yourself that you are in the grace of God, and that what you experience is only a trial, and not abandonment on the part of God. At such times it is not the will of God that you should have this assurance ; and He so wills it for your greater advantage, in order that you may humble yourself the more, and increase your prayers and acts of confidence in His mercy. You desire to see, and God wills that you should not see. For the rest, St. Francis of Sales says : ' The resolution not to consent to any sin, however small, is a sure

sign that we are in God's grace.' But a soul in profound desolation cannot even clearly discern this resolution ; nevertheless, in such a state she must not aim at feeling what she wills ; it is enough to will with the point of the will. In this manner she should entirely abandon herself into the arms of the Divine Goodness. Oh, how do such acts of confidence and resignation ravish the heart of God, when made in the midst of the darkness of desolation ! Ah, let us simply trust in a God, who (as St. Teresa says) loves us far better than we love ourselves.

27. Let these souls, then, so dear to God, and who are resolutely determined to belong entirely to Him, take comfort, although at the same time they see themselves deprived of every consolation. Their desolation is a sign of their being very acceptable to God, and that He has for them a place prepared in His heavenly kingdom, which overflows with consolations as full as they are lasting. And let them hold for certain, that the more they are afflicted in the present life, so much the more they shall be consoled in eternity : " According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul" (Ps. xciii. 19) For the encouragement of souls in desolation, I will here mention what is related in the life of St. Jane de Chantal, who for the space of forty years was tormented by the most fearful interior trials, by temptations, by fears of being in enmity with God, and of being even quite forsaken by Him. Her afflictions were so excruciating and unremitting, that she declared her sole ray of comfort came from the thought of death. Moreover she said : ' I am so furiously assaulted, that I know not where to hide my poor soul. I seem at times on the point of losing all patience, and of giving up all as utterly lost.' 'The tyrant of temptation is so relentless,' she says, ' that any hour of the day I would gladly barter it with the loss of my life ; and sometimes it happens that I can neither eat nor sleep.'

28. During the last eight or nine years of her life, her temptations became still more violent. Mother de Scatel said that her saintly Mother de Chantal suffered a continual interior martyrdom night and day, at prayer, at

work, and even during sleep ; so that she felt the deepest compassion for her. The saint endured assaults against every virtue (except elastity), and had likewise to contend with doubts, darkness, and disgusts. Sometimes God would withdraw all lights from her, and seem indignant with her, and just on the point of expelling her from Him ; so that terror drove her to look in some other direction for relief : but failing to find any, she was obliged to return to look on God, and to abandon herself to His mercy. She seemed each moment ready to yield to the violence of her temptations. The Divine assistanee did not indeed forsake her ; but it seemed to her to have done so, since, instead of finding satisfaction in any thing, she found only weariness and anguish in prayer, in reading spiritual books, in communion, and in all other exercises of piety. Her sole resouree in this state of dereliction was to look upon God, and to let Him do His will.

29. The saint said : ‘ In all my abandonments my mere life is a new cross to me, and my incapability of action adds considerably to its heaviness.’ And it was therefore that she compared herself to a siek person overwhelmed with sufferings, unable to turn from one side to the other, speechless, so as not to be able to express his ills, and blind, so as not to discern whether the attendants are administering to him medicine or poison. And then, weeping bitterly, she added, ‘ I seem to be without faith, without hope, and without love for my God.’ Nevertheless, the saint maintained throughout her serenity of countenance and affability in conversation, and kept her looks fixedly bent towards God, in the bosom of whose blessed will she constantly reposed. Wherefore St. Franeis of Sales, who was her director, and knew well what an object of predilection her beautiful soul was to Almighty God, wrote thus of her : ‘ Her heart resembled a deaf musician, who, though he may sing most exquisitely, can derive no pleasure from it himself.’ And to herself he wrote as follows : ‘ You must endeavour to serve your Saviour solely through love of His blessed will, utterly deprived of consolations, and overwhelmed by a deluge of fears and sadness.’ It is thus that the saints are formed :

‘ Long did the chisels ring around,
Long did the mallet’s blows rebound,
Long work’d the head and toil’d the hand,
Ere stood thy stones as now they stand.’

The saints are precisely these choice stones, of whom the Church sings, which are reduced to shapeliness and beauty by the strokes of the chisel ; that is, by temptations, by fears, by darkness, and other torments, internal and external ; till at length they are made worthy to be enthroned in the blessed kingdom of Paradise.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Jesus, my Hope, my Love and only Love of my soul, I deserve not Thy consolations and sweet visitations ; keep them for those innocent souls which have always loved Thee ; sinner that I am, I do not deserve them, nor do I ask for them : this only do I ask, give me grace to love Thee, to accomplish Thy adorable will during my whole life ; and then dispose of me as Thou pleasest ! Unhappy me ! far other darkness, other terrors, other abandonments would be due to the outrages which I have done Thee : hell were my just award, where, separated from Thee for ever, and totally abandoned by Thee, I should shed tears eternally, without ever being able to love Thee more. But no, my Jesus, I accept of every punishment ; only spare me this. Thou art deserving of an infinite love ; Thou hast placed me under an excessive obligation of loving Thee ; oh, no, I cannot trust myself to live and not love Thee ! I do love Thee, my Sovereign Good ; I love Thee with my whole heart ; I love Thee more than myself ; I love Thee, and have no other desire than to love Thee. I own that this my good-will is the pure effect of Thy grace ; but do Thou, O my Lord, perfect Thy own work ; withdraw not Thy helping hand till death ! Oh, never for a moment leave me in my own hands ; give me strength to vanquish temptations and to overcome myself ; and for this end give me grace always to have recourse to Thee ! I wish to belong wholly to Thee ; I give Thee my body, my soul, my will, and my liberty ; I will no longer live for myself, but for Thee alone, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Love, and my

All : *Deus meus et omnia* : my God and my All. I desire to become a saint, and I hope it of Thee. Afflict me as Thou wilt, deprive me of all ; only deprive me not of Thy grace and of Thy love. O Mary, the hope of sinners, great is your power with God ; I confide fully in your intercession : I entreat you by your love of Jesus Christ, help me, and make me a saint !

O creatures vain, my heart full fain
Doth bid ye all farewell !
I'm yours no more, nor as of yore
Mine own. Broke is the spell,
Riv'n every tie, for God am I.
Yes, Jesus dear, Thine, wholly Thine ;
Oh, let one link our hearts entwine !

O kindest Lord, Thy love ador'd
Pervade my senses quite ;
Rule now, and rest in this my breast,
Here take up Thy delight :
Whence I of old, a rebel bold,
Have forc'd Thee to take flight.
O Sovereign sweet, I, at Thy feet,
Crave mercy in Thy sight.

O Love divine, where Thy rays shine
All glows with heav'nly bliss ;
Come to my heart, Thy grace impart,
And gifts of holiness ;
Then, Love divine, may it be mine
Of Thy pure flame to waste and pine.

ABSTRACT OF THE VIRTUES TREATED OF IN THIS WORK, TO
BE PRACTISED BY HIM WHO LOVES JESUS CHRIST.

I. We must patiently endure the tribulations of this life, — ill-health, sorrows, poverty, losses, bereavement of kindred, affronts, persecutions, and all that is disagreeable. Let us invariably look on the trials of this world as signs of God's love towards us, and of His desire to save us in the world to come. And let us, moreover, be fully persuaded that the involuntary mortifications which God Himself sends us are far more pleasing to Him than those which are the fruit of our own choice.

II. In sickness let us endeavour to resign ourselves

entirely to the will of God; no devout exercise is more acceptable to Him than this. If at such times we are unable to meditate, let us fix our eyes on our crucified Lord, and offer Him our sufferings in union with all that He endured for us upon the cross. And when we are told that we are about to die, let us accept the tidings with tranquillity and in the spirit of sacrifice; that is, with the desire to die, in order to give pleasure to Jesus Christ: it was the like desire that gave all the merit to the death of the martyrs. We should then say: O Lord, behold me here with no other will but Thine own blessed will; I am willing to suffer as much as Thou pleasest; I wish to die whenever Thou wilt. Nor should we then wish to have our life prolonged, in order to do penance for our sins; to accept death with perfect resignation outweighs all other penance.

III. We must likewise practice conformity with the will of God in bearing poverty and the various inconveniences which accompany it: cold, hunger, fatigue, contempt, and scorn.

IV. Nor should we be less resigned to losses, whether of property or of relatives and friends, on whom our ease and happiness depended. Let us acquire the good habit of saying in every adversity: God hath so willed it, and so I will it likewise. And at the death of our relations, instead of wasting time in fruitless tears, let us employ it in praying for their souls; and offer to Jesus Christ, in their behalf, the pain of our bereavement.

V. Let us, moreover, force ourselves to endure scorn and insult with patience and tranquillity. Let us answer terms of outrage and injury with words of gentleness; but as long as we feel ourselves disturbed, the best plan is to keep silence, till the mind grows tranquil: and meanwhile let us not be fretfully speaking to others of the affront we have received, but in silence offer it to Jesus Christ, who endured so much for us.

VI. Behave kindly to all, to superiors and inferiors, to the high-born and peasant, to relations and strangers; but more especially to the poor and infirm, and, above all, to those who regard us with an evil eye.

VII. Gentleness in the correction of faults is more

efficacious than any other means or reasons that may be employed. Be therefore on your guard against correcting in a fit of passion ; for then harshness is sure to be mingled with it, either in word or action. Beware likewise of correcting the person in fault while he is excited ; for in like cases the result is exasperation instead of improvement.

VIII. Envy not the great ones of this world their riches, honours, dignities, or applause given them by men ; but envy rather those who most love Jesus Christ, who undoubtedly enjoy greater happiness than the first monarchs of the earth. Return thanks to the Lord for enlightening you to discover the vanity of all worldly things, for the sake of which so many unhappily perish.

IX. In all our actions and thoughts let us seek only the pleasure of Almighty God, and not our private satisfaction ; and let us therefore lay aside all disquietude when our efforts are attended with failure. And when we succeed, let us be no less cautious against seeking the thanks and approbation of men ; should they murmur against us, let us pay no attention to it ; our consolation will be to have striven to please God, and not men.

X. The chief means of perfection are, in the first place, to avoid all deliberate sin, however small. Should we, however, happen unfortunately to commit a fault, let us refrain from becoming angry and impatient with ourselves : we must, on such occasions, quietly repent of it ; and while we make an act of love to Jesus Christ, and beg His help, we must promise Him not to repeat the fault.

XI. In the second place, to have an earnest desire to acquire the perfection of the saints, and to suffer all things to please Jesus Christ ; and if we have not this desire, to beseech Jesus Christ, through His bounty, to grant it us ; since, as long as we do not feel a sincere desire of becoming saints, we shall never make one step forward in the way of perfection.

XII. In the third place, to have a firm resolution of arriving at perfection : whoever wants this resolution, works but languidly, and in the occasion does not overcome his repugnances ; whereas a resolute soul, by the Divine aid, which never fails her, surmounts every obstacle.

XIII. In the fourth place, to make daily two, or at least one hour's mental prayer ; and, except in case of urgent necessity, never to relinquish it for the sake of any weariness, dryness, or trouble that we may experience.

XIV. In the fifth place, to frequent Holy Communion several times a week, in obedience to the counsel of our director ; for frequent communion should not be practised against the consent of our director. The same rule holds good with regard to external mortifications, such as fasting, wearing the *cilice*, taking the discipline, and the rest ; mortifications of this kind, when practised without obedience to our spiritual director, will either destroy health or produce vain glory. So that it is necessary for each one to have his own director, so that all may be regulated in obedience to him.

XV. In the sixth place, to pray continually, by having recourse to Jesus Christ in all our necessities, by invoking likewise the intercession of our Angel Guardian, of our Holy Patrons, and most particularly of the Divine Mother, through whose hands Almighty God bestows all graces upon us. It has already been shown, at the end of Chapter viii., that our welfare entirely depends on prayer. We must especially not pass a day without begging God to grant us the gift of perseverance in His grace ; whosoever asks for this perseverance obtains it, but he that does not ask for it obtains it not, and is damned : we must pray, too, that Jesus Christ may grant us His holy love and perfect conformity with His Divine will. Neither should we forget to pray for every grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. We must first make these prayers when we rise in the morning, and afterwards repeat them in our meditation, at Holy Communion. at the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and again in the evening at the examination of conscience. We must particularly cry to God for help in the time of temptation, and more especially in temptations against purity, when we should not cease to call for succour on the holy names of Jesus and Mary. He that prays, conquers ; he that prays not, is conquered.

XVI. With respect to humility, not to pride ourselves

on riches, honours, high birth, talents, or any other natural advantage, and still less on any spiritual gift, reflecting that all are the gifts of God. To consider ourselves the worst of all, and consequently to delight in being despised by others; and not to act as some do, who declare themselves the worst of men, and at the same time wish to be treated as the best. Moreover, to receive corrections humbly, and without attempts to excuse ourselves, and this even though blamed wrongfully; except when to defend ourselves would be necessary in order to prevent others being scandalised.

XVII. Much more ought we to banish all desire of appearing in public, and of being honoured by the world. The maxim of St. Francis should never be out of our sight: 'We are just what we are before God.' It would be still worse for a religious to covet posts of honour and superiority in his community. The true honour of a religious is to be the most humble of all; and he is the humblest of all who most joyfully embraces humiliations.

XVIII. Detach your heart from all creatures. Whoever continues bound by the slightest fondness to things of earth can never rise to a perfect union with God.

XIX. To detach ourselves especially from an undue affection for our relations. It was said by St. Philip Neri, that 'whatever affection we bestow on creatures is so much taken from God.' In deciding on a state of life, we must be quite unbiassed by the advice of parents, who generally keep their own interests in view, rather than our real welfare. Cast away all considerations of human respect, and of the vain esteem of men; and, above all, be detached from self-will. We must leave all in order to gain all. '*Totum pro toto*, All for all,' writes Thomas à Kempis.

XX. Not to give way to anger, whatever happens; but if perchance the sparks of passion are suddenly lighted in our breasts, let us call on God, and refrain from acting or speaking till we are sure that our anger is appeased. We shall find it of great service to arm ourselves in prayer against every chance of irritation that may befall us, in order not then to give way to culpable resentment; we

should always remember that saying of St. Francis of Sales : 'I never remember to have been angry without afterwards regretting it.'

XXI. All sanctity consists in loving God, and all love of God consists in doing His blessed will. We must, therefore, bow with resignation to all the dispositions of Divine Providence without reserve ; and so cheerfully submit to the adversity as well as prosperity which God sends, to the state of life in which God places us to the sort of health which God bestows on us : and this should be the grand aim of all our prayers, namely, that God would enable us to fulfil His holy will in all things. And in order to be certain of the Divine will, the religious must depend on obedience to his superior, and those who are in the world to their confessor ; for nothing is more certain than that saying of St. Philip Neri : 'We shall have no account to render to God of what is done through obedience.' Which is to be understood, of course, as long as there is no evident sin in the command.

XXII. There are two remedies against temptations : *resignation* and *prayer*. *Resignation*, for though temptations do not come from God, yet He permits them for our good. Wherefore beware of yielding to vexation, however annoying the temptations may be ; be resigned to the will of God, who allows them ; and take up the arms of prayer, which are the most powerful and the most certain to overcome our enemies. Bad thoughts, however filthy and abominable, are not sins ; it is only the consenting to them which makes the sin. We shall never be overcome as long as we call on the holy names of Jesus and Mary. During the assaults of temptation, it is of service to renew our resolution to suffer death rather than to offend God ; it is also a good practice repeatedly to sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, and with holy water ; it is of great help, too, to discover the temptation to the confessor. But prayer is the most necessary remedy, and continual cries for help to Jesus and Mary.

XXIII. Then as to spiritual desolations, there are two acts in which we ought principally to exercise ourselves : **1st, to humble ourselves, with the sincere avowal that we**

deserve no better treatment; 2d, to resign ourselves to the will of God, and to abandon ourselves into the arms of His Divine goodness. When God favours us with consolations, let us prepare ourselves for coming trials, which generally follow consolations. If it please God to leave us in desolation, let us be humble and fully resigned to His Divine will, and we shall thus reap far greater advantage from desolations than from consolations.

XXIV. In order to live always well, we must store up deeply in our minds certain general maxims of eternal life. All passes away in this life, whether it be joy or sorrow; but in eternity nothing passes away. What good is all the greatness of this world at the hour of death? All that comes from God, whether it be adverse or prosperous, all is good, and is for our welfare. We must leave all, to gain all. There is no peace to be found without God. To love God and save one's soul is the one thing needful. We need only be afraid of sin. If God be lost, all is lost. He that desires nothing in this world is master of the whole world. He that prays is saved, and he that prays not is damned. Let me die, and give God pleasure. God is cheap at any cost. Every pain is slight to him who has deserved hell. He bears all who looks on Jesus crucified. Every thing becomes a pain that is not done for God. Whoever wishes for God alone is rich in every good. Happy the man who can say: 'My Jesus, I desire Thee alone, and nothing more!' He that loves God, finds pleasure in every thing; he that loves not God, finds no true pleasure in any thing.

ON PRAYER,

AS THE GREAT MEANS OF OBTAINING SALVATION AND ALL THE GRACES
WHICH WE DESIRE OF GOD.

A Work of Ascetic Theology.

TO THE INCARNATE WORD,

JESUS CHRIST,

THE BELOVED OF THE ETERNAL FATHER,

THE BLESSED OF THE LORD,

THE AUTHOR OF LIFE,

THE KING OF GLORY,

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD,

THE EXPECTED OF NATIONS,

THE DESIRE OF THE ETERNAL HILLS,

THE BREAD OF HEAVEN,

THE JUDGE OF ALL,

THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN,

THE MASTER OF VIRTUES,

THE LAMB WITHOUT SPOT,

THE MAN OF SORROWS,

THE ETERNAL PRIEST, AND VICTIM OF LOVE,

THE HOPE OF SINNERS,

THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACES,

THE GOOD SHEPHERD,

THE LOVER OF SOULS,

ALPHONSUS THE SINNER

CONSECRATES THIS BOOK.

Dedication to Jesus and Mary.

O INCARNATE WORD, Thou hast given Thy Blood and Thy Life to confer on our prayers that power by which, according to Thy promise, they obtain for us all that we ask. And we, O God, are so careless of our salvation, that we will not even ask Thee for the graces that we must have if we would be saved ! In prayer Thou hast given us the key of all Thy Divine treasures ; and we, rather than pray, choose to remain in our misery. Alas ! O Lord, enlighten us, and make us know the value of prayers made in Thy Name and by Thy merits, in the eyes of Thy Eternal Father. I consecrate to Thee this my book ; bless it, and grant that all those into whose hands it falls may have the will to pray always, and may exert themselves to stir up others also to avail themselves of this great means of salvation.

To thee also do I recommend my little work, O Mary, great Mother of God : patronise it, and obtain for all who read it the spirit of prayer, and of continual recourse in all their necessities to thy Son, and to thee, who art the Dispenser of graces, the Mother of mercy, and who never leavest unsatisfied him who recommends himself to thee, O mighty Virgin, but obtainest from God for thy servants whatever thou **askest.**



ON PRAYER.



PART I.

THE NECESSITY, POWER, AND CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

INTRODUCTION, NECESSARY TO BE READ.

I HAVE published several spiritual works,—on visiting the Blessed Sacrament, on the Passion of Jesus Christ, on the Glories of Mary, and, besides, a work against the Materialists and Deists, with other devout little treatises. Lately I have brought out a work on the Infancy of our Saviour, entitled *Novena for Christmas*; and another entitled *Preparation for Death*, besides the one on the Eternal Maxims, most useful for meditation and for sermons, to which are added nine discourses suitable during seasons of Divine chastisements. But I do not think that I have written a more useful work than the present, in which I speak of prayer as a necessary and certain means of obtaining salvation, and all the graces which we require for that object. If it were in my power, I would distribute a copy of it to every Catholic in the world, in order to show him the absolute necessity of prayer for salvation.

I say this, because on the one hand I see that the absolute necessity of prayer is taught throughout the Holy Scriptures, and by all the holy fathers; while, on the other hand, I see that Christians are very careless in their practice of this great means of salvation. And, sadder still, I see that preachers take very little care to speak of it to their flocks, and confessors to their penitents; I see,

moreover, that even the spiritual books now popular do not speak sufficiently of it; for there is not a thing which preachers, and confessors, and spiritual books should insist upon with more warmth and energy than prayer; not but that they teach many excellent means of keeping ourselves in the grace of God, such as avoiding the occasions of sin, frequenting the sacraments, resisting temptations, hearing the Word of God, meditating on the eternal truths, and other means,—all of them, I admit, most useful; but, I say, what profit is there in sermons, meditations, and all the other means pointed out by masters of the spiritual life, if we forget to pray? since our Lord has declared that He will grant His graces to no one who does not pray. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” Without prayer, in the ordinary course of providence, all the meditations we make, all our resolutions, all our promises, will be useless. If we do not pray, we shall be always unfaithful to the inspirations of God, and to the promises we make Him. Because, in order actually to do good, to conquer temptations, to practise virtues, and to observe God’s law, it is not enough to receive illumination from God, and to meditate and make resolutions, but we require, moreover, the actual assistance of God; and, as we shall soon see, He does not give this assistance except to those who pray, and pray with perseverance. The light we receive, and the considerations and good resolutions that we make, are of use to incite us to the act of prayer when we are in danger, and are tempted to transgress God’s law; for then prayer will obtain for us God’s help, and we shall be preserved from sin; but if in such moments we do not pray, we shall be lost.

My intention in prefacing my book with this sentiment is, that my readers may thank God for giving them an opportunity, by means of this little book, to receive the grace of reflecting more deeply on the importance of prayer; for all adults who are saved, are ordinarily saved by this single means of grace. And therefore I ask my readers to thank God; for surely it is a great mercy when He gives the light and the grace to pray. I hope, then, that you, my beloved brother, after reading this little work, will never from this day forward neglect to have continual recourse

to God in prayer, whenever you are tempted to offend Him. If ever in times past you have had your conscience burdened with many sins, know that the cause of this has been the neglect of prayer, and not asking God for help to resist the temptations which assailed you. I pray you, therefore, to read it again and again with the greatest attention; not because it is my production, but because it is a means which God offers you for the good of your eternal salvation, thereby giving you to understand that He wishes you to be saved. And after having read it yourself, induce as many of your friends and neighbours as you can to read it also. Now let us begin in the name of the Lord.

The Apostle writes to Timothy: "I beseech, therefore, that first of all supplications, petitions, and thanksgivings be made" (1 Tim. ii. 1). St. Thomas explains, that prayer is properly the lifting up of the soul to God.¹ *Petition* is that kind of prayer which begs for determinate objects; when the thing sought is indeterminate (as when we say, 'Incline to my aid, O God!'), it is called *supplication*. *Obsecration* is a solemn adjuration, or representation of the grounds on which we dare to ask a favour; as when we say, 'By Thy cross and passion, O Lord, deliver us!' Finally, *thanksgiving* is the returning of thanks for benefits received, whereby, says St. Thomas, we merit to receive greater favours. Prayer, in a strict sense, says the holy doctor, means recourse to God; but in its general signification it includes all the kinds just enumerated. It is in this latter sense that the word is used in this book.

In order, then, to attach ourselves to this great means of salvation, we must first of all consider how necessary it is to us, and how powerful it is to obtain for us all the graces which we can desire from God, if we know how to ask for them as we ought. Hence, in the first part, we will speak first of the necessity and power of prayer; and next, of the conditions necessary to make it efficacious with God. Then, in the second part, we will show that the grace of prayer is given to all; and there we will treat of the manner in which grace ordinarily operates.

CHAPTER I.

THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

ONE of the errors of Pelagianism was the assertion that prayer is not necessary for salvation. Pelagius, the impious author of that heresy, said that man will only be damned for neglecting to know the truths necessary to be learned. What a thing! St. Augustine said: ‘Pelagius discussed every thing except how to pray;’² though, as the saint held and taught, prayer is the only means of acquiring the science of the saints; according to the text of St. James: “If any man want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not” (St. James i. 5). The Scriptures are clear enough in pointing out how necessary it is to pray, if we would be saved. “We ought always to pray, and not to faint” (St. Luke xviii. 1). “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (St. Matt. xxvi. 41). “Ask, and it shall be given you” (St. Matt. vii. 7). The words ‘we ought,’ ‘pray,’ ‘ask,’ according to the general consent of theologians, impose the precept, and denote the necessity of prayer. Wickliffe said, that these texts are to be understood, not precisely of prayer, but only of the necessity of good works, for in his system prayer was only well-doing; but this was his error, and was expressly condemned by the Church. Hence Lessius wrote that it is heresy to deny that prayer is necessary for salvation in adults; as it evidently appears from Scripture that prayer is the means, without which we cannot obtain the help necessary for salvation.³

The reason of this is evident. Without the assistance of God’s grace we can do no good thing: “Without Me, ye can do nothing” (St John xv. 5). St Augustine remarks on this passage, that our Lord did not say, ‘Without Me, ye can complete nothing,’ but ‘without Me, ye can do nothing;’ giving us to understand, that without grace we cannot even begin to do a good thing. Nay more, St. Paul writes, that of ourselves we cannot even have the wish to do good. “Not that we are sufficient to think any

thing of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. iii. 5). If we cannot even think a good thing, much less can we wish it. The same thing is taught in many other places: "God worketh all in all" (1 Cor. xii. 6); "I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them" (Ezech. xxxvi. 27). So that, as St. Leo I. says, 'Man does no good thing, except that which God, by His grace, enables him to do ;'⁴ and hence the Council of Trent said: 'If any one shall assert, that without the previous inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and His assistance, man can believe, hope, love, or repent, as he ought, in order to obtain the grace of justification, let him be anathema.'⁵

The author of the *Opus Imperfectum* says, that God has given to some animals swiftness, to others claws, to others wings, for the preservation of their life; but He has so formed man, that God Himself is his only strength.⁶ So that man is completely unable to provide for his own safety, since God has willed that whatever he has, or can have, should come entirely from the assistance of His grace.

But this grace is not given in God's ordinary providence, except to those who pray for it; according to the celebrated dictum of Gennadius: 'We believe that no one approaches to be saved, except at the invitation of God; that no one who is invited works out his salvation, except by the help of God; that no one merits this help, unless he prays.'⁷ From these two premises, on the one hand, that we can do nothing without the assistance of grace; and on the other, that this assistance is only given ordinarily by God to the man that prays, who does not see that the consequence follows, that prayer is absolutely necessary to us for salvation? And although the first graces, which come to us without any co-operation on our part, such as the call to faith or to penance, are, as St. Augustine says, granted by God even to those who do not pray; yet the saint considers it certain that the other graces, and specially the gift of perseverance, are not granted, except in answer to prayer: 'God gives us some things, as the commencement of faith, even when we do

not pray. Other things, such as perseverance, he has **only** provided for those who pray.⁸

Hence it is that the generality of theologians, following St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine, and other Fathers, teach that prayer is necessary to adults, not only because of obligation of the precept (as they say), but because it is necessary as a means of salvation. That is to say, in the ordinary course of Providence, it is impossible that a Christian should be saved without recommending himself to God, and asking for the graces necessary to salvation. St. Thomas teaches the same: 'After baptism, continual prayer is necessary to man, in order that he may enter heaven; for though by baptism our sins are remitted, there still remain concupiscence to assail us from within, and the world and the devil to assail us from without.'⁹ The reason then which makes us certain of the necessity of prayer is shortly this: in order to be saved we must contend and conquer: "He that striveth for the mastery is not crowned except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. ii. 5). But without the Divine assistance we cannot resist the might of so many and so powerful enemies: now this assistance is only granted to prayer; therefore without prayer there is no salvation.

Moreover, that prayer is the only ordinary means of receiving the Divine gifts is more distinctly proved by St. Thomas in another place, where he says, that whatever graces God has from all eternity determined to give us, He will only give them if we pray for them.¹⁰ St. Gregory says the same thing: 'Man by prayer merits to receive that which God had before the worlds determined to give him.'¹¹ Not, says St. Thomas, that prayer is necessary in order that God may know our necessities, but in order that we may know the necessity of having recourse to God to obtain the help necessary for our salvation, and may thus acknowledge Him to be the author of all our good.¹² As, therefore, it is God's law that we should provide ourselves with bread by sowing corn, and with wine by planting vines; so has He ordained that we should receive the graces necessary to salvation by means of prayer: "Ask,

and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find" (St. Matt. vii. 7).

We, in sum, are merely beggars, who have nothing but what God bestows on us as alms : "But I am a beggar and poor" (Ps. xxxix. 18). The Lord, says St. Augustine, desires and wills to pour forth His graces upon us, but will not give them except to him who prays. 'God wishes to give, but only gives to him who asks.'¹³ This is declared in the words : "Seek, and it shall be given you." Whence it follows, says St. Teresa, that he who seeks not, does not receive. As moisture is necessary for the life of plants, to prevent them drying up, so, says St. Chrysostom, is prayer necessary for our salvation.¹⁴ Or, as he says in another place, prayer vivifies the soul, as the soul vivifies the body : 'As the body without soul cannot live, so the soul without prayer is dead and stinking.' He says stinking, because the man who omits to recommend himself to God, at once begins to be defiled with sins. Prayer is also called the food of the soul, because the body cannot be supported without food ; nor can the soul, says St. Augustine, be kept alive without prayer : 'As the flesh is nourished by victuals, so is man supported by prayers.' All these comparisons used by the holy fathers are intended by them to teach the absolute necessity of prayer for the salvation of every one.

Moreover, prayer is the most necessary weapon of defence against our enemies ; he who does not avail himself of it, says St. Thomas, is lost. He does not doubt that the reason of Adam's fall was, because he did not recommend himself to God when he was tempted : 'He sinned because he had not recourse to the Divine assistance.' St. Gelasius said the same of the rebel angels : 'Receiving the grace of God in vain, they could not persevere, because they did not pray.'¹⁵ St. Charles Borromeo, in a pastoral letter,¹⁶ observes, that among all the means of salvation recommended by Jesus Christ in the Gospel, the first place is given to prayer ; and He has determined that this should distinguish His Church from all false religions, when He calls her 'the house of prayer : ' "My house is a house of prayer" (St. Matt. xxi. 13). St. Charles concludes that prayer

is 'the beginning, the progress, and the completion of all virtues.' So that in darkness, distress, and danger, we have no other hope than to raise our eyes to God, and with fervent prayers to beseech His mercy to save us: "As we know not," said king Josaphat, "what to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee." (2 Par. xx. 12). This also was David's practice, who could find no other means of safety from his enemies than continual prayer to God to deliver him from them: "My eyes are ever towards the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare" (Psalm xxiv. 15). So he did nothing but pray: "Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me; for I am alone and poor" (Ps. v. 16). "I cried unto Thee, O Lord; save me, that I may keep Thy commandments" (Ps. cxviii. 146). Lord, turn Thine eyes to me, have pity on me, and save me; for I can do nothing, and beside Thee there is none that can help me.

And, indeed, how could we ever resist our enemies and observe God's precepts, especially since Adam's sin, which has rendered us so weak and infirm, unless we had prayer as a means whereby we can obtain from God sufficient light and strength to enable us to observe them? It was a blasphemy of Luther's to say, that after the sin of Adam the observance of God's law has become absolutely impossible to man. Jansenius also said that there are some precepts which are impossible even to the just, with the power which they actually have, and so far his proposition bears a good sense; but it was justly condemned by the Church for the addition which he made to it, when he said that they have not the grace to make the precepts possible: '*Deest quoque gratia quâ possibile fiant.*' It is true, says St. Augustine, that man, in consequence of his weakness, is unable to fulfil some of God's commands with his present strength and the ordinary grace given to all men; but he can easily, by prayer, obtain such further aid as he requires for his salvation: 'God commands not impossibilities; but by commanding He suggests to you to do what you can, to ask for what is beyond your strength; and He helps you, that you may be able.'¹⁷ This is a celebrated text, which was afterwards adopted and made a

doctrine of faith by the Council of Trent.¹⁸ The holy doctor immediately adds, 'Let us see whence?' (*i. e.* how man is enabled to do that which he cannot.) 'By medicine he can do that which his natural sickness renders impossible to him.' That is, by prayer we obtain a remedy for our weakness; for when we pray, God gives us strength to do that which we cannot do (of ourselves). We cannot believe, continues St. Augustine, that God would have imposed on us the observance of a law, and then made the law impossible. When, therefore, He shows us, that of ourselves we are unable to observe all His commands, it is simply to admonish us to do the easier things by means of the ordinary grace which He bestows on us, and then to do the more difficult things by means of the greater help which we can obtain by prayer. 'By the very fact that it is absurd to suppose that God could have commanded us to do impossible things, we are admonished what to do in easy matters, and what to ask for in difficulties.'¹⁹ But why, it will be asked, has God commanded us to do things impossible to our natural strength? Precisely for this, says St. Augustine, that we may be incited to pray for help to do that which of ourselves we cannot do. 'He commands some things which we cannot do, that we may know what we ought to ask of Him.'²⁰ And in another place: 'The law was given, that grace might be sought for; grace was given that the law might be fulfilled.'²¹ The law cannot be kept without grace, and God has given the law with this object, that we may always ask Him for grace to observe it. In another place he says: 'The law is good, if it be used lawfully; what, then, is the lawful use of the law?' He replies: 'when by the law we perceive our own weakness, and ask of God the grace to heal us.'²² St. Augustine then says: We ought to use the law; but for what purpose? to learn by means of the law, which we find to be above our strength, our own inability to observe it, in order that we may then obtain by prayer the Divine aid to cure our weakness. St. Bernard's teaching is the same: 'What are we, or what is our strength, that we should be able to resist so many temptations? This certainly it was that God intended, that we, seeing our deficiencies, and

that we have no other help, should with all humility have recourse to His mercy.²³ God knows how useful it is to us to be obliged to pray, in order to keep us humble, and to exercise our confidence; and He therefore permits us to be assaulted by enemies too mighty to be overcome by our own strength, that by prayer we may obtain from His mercy aid to resist them; and it is especially to be remarked, that no one can resist the impure temptations of the flesh, without recommending himself to God when he is tempted. This foe is so terrible that, when he fights with us, he, as it were, takes away all light; he makes us forget all our meditations, all our good resolutions; he makes us also disregard the truths of faith, and even almost lose the fear of the Divine punishments. For he conspires with our natural inclinations, which drive us with the greatest violence to the indulgence of sensual pleasures. He who in such a moment does not have recourse to God is lost. The only defence against this temptation is prayer, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says: 'Prayer is the bulwark of chastity;' and before him Solomon: "And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it, I went to the Lord and besought Him" (Wisd. viii. 21). Chastity is a virtue which we have not strength to practise, unless God gives it us; and God does not give this strength except to him who asks for it. But who ever prays for it will certainly obtain it.

Hence St. Thomas observes (in contradiction to Jansenius), that we ought not to say that the precept of chastity, or any other, is impossible to us; for though we cannot observe it by our own strength, we can by God's assistance. 'We must say, that what we can do with the Divine assistance is not altogether impossible to us.'²⁴ Nor let it be said that it appears an injustice to order a cripple to walk straight. No, says St. Augustine, it is not an injustice, provided always that means are given him to find the remedy for his lameness; for after this, if he continues to go crooked, the fault is his own. 'It is most wisely commanded that man should walk uprightly, so that when he sees that he cannot do so of himself, he may seek a remedy to heal the lameness of sin.'²⁵ In sum, the same

holy doctor says, that he will never know how to live well who does not know how to pray well. 'He knows how to live aright who knows how to pray aright;' and, on the other hand, St. Francis of Assisi says, that without prayer you can never hope to find good fruit in a soul. Wrongly, therefore, do those sinners excuse themselves who say that they have no strength to resist temptation. But if you have not this strength, why do you not ask for it? is the reproof which St. James gives them: "You have it not, because you ask it not" (St. James iv. 2). There is no doubt that we are too weak to resist the attacks of our enemies. But, on the other hand, it is certain that God is faithful, as the Apostle says, and will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with the temptation issue, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). 'He will provide an issue for it,' says Primasius, 'by the protection of His grace, that you may be able to withstand the temptation.' We are weak, but God is strong; when we ask Him for aid, He communicates His strength to us; and we shall be able to do all things, as the Apostle reasonably assured himself: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). He, therefore, who falls has no excuse (says St. Chrysostom), because he has neglected to pray; for if he had prayed, he would not have been overcome by his enemies. 'Nor can any one be excused who, by ceasing to pray, has shown that he did not wish to overcome his enemy.'²⁶

Here a difficulty occurs, whether it is necessary to have recourse also to the intercession of the saints to obtain the grace of God. So far as to say that it is a lawful and useful thing to invoke the saints, as intercessors, to obtain for us, by the merits of Jesus Christ, that which we, by our demerits, are not worthy to receive, is a doctrine of the Church, declared by the Council of Trent.²⁷ 'It is good and useful to invoke them by supplication, and to fly to their aid and assistance to obtain benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ.' Such invocation was condemned by the impious Calvin, but most illogically. For

if it is lawful and profitable to invoke living saints to aid us, and to beseech them to assist us with their prayers, as the Prophet Baruch did: "And pray ye for us to the Lord our God" (Bar. i. 13); and St. Paul: "Brethren, pray for us;" and as God Himself commanded the friends of Job to recommend themselves to his prayers, that by the merits of Job He might look favourably on them: "Go to my servant Job, . . . and my servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept;"—if, then, it is lawful to recommend ourselves to the living, how can it be unlawful to invoke the saints who in heaven enjoy God face to face? This is not derogating from the honour due to God, but doubling it; for it is honouring the king not only in his person but in his servants. Therefore, says St. Thomas, it is good to have recourse to many saints, 'because by the prayers of many we can sometimes obtain that which we cannot by the prayers of one.'²⁸ And if any one object, But why have recourse to the saints to pray for us, when they are already praying for all who are worthy of it? The same doctor answers, that no one can be said to be worthy that the saints should pray for him; but that 'he becomes worthy by having recourse to the saint with devotion.'²⁹

Again, it is disputed whether there is any use in recommending oneself to the souls in purgatory. Some say that the souls in that state cannot pray for us; and these rely on the authority of St. Thomas, who says that those souls, while they are being purged by pain, are inferior to us, and therefore 'are not in a state to pray for us, but rather require our prayers.'³⁰ But many other doctors, as Bellarmine, Sylvius, Cardinal Gotti, and others, affirm with great probability, that we should piously believe that God manifests our prayer to those holy souls, in order that they may pray for us; and that so the charitable interchange of mutual prayer may be kept up between them and us.³¹ Nor do St. Thomas's words present much difficulty; for, as Sylvius and Gotti say, it is one thing not to be in a state to pray, another not to be able to pray. It is true that those souls are not in a state to pray, because, as St. Thomas says, while suffering they are inferior to us, and rather require our prayers; nevertheless, in this state they are well

able to pray, as they are friends of God. If a father keeps a son whom he tenderly loves in confinement for some fault, if the son then is not in a state to pray for himself, is that any reason why he cannot pray for others? and may he not expect to obtain what he asks, knowing, as he does, his father's affection for him? So the souls in purgatory, being beloved by God, and confirmed in grace, have absolutely no impediment to prevent their praying for us. Still the church does not invoke them, or implore their intercession, because ordinarily they have no cognisance of our prayers. But we may piously believe that God makes our prayers known to them; and then they, full of charity as they are, most assuredly do not omit to pray for us. St. Catherine of Bologna, whenever she desired any favour, had recourse to the souls in purgatory, and was immediately heard. She even testified that by the intercession of the souls in purgatory she had obtained many graces which she had not been able to obtain by the intercession of the saints.

But here let me make a digression in favour of those holy souls. If we desire the aid of their prayers, it is but fair that we should mind to aid them with our prayers and good works. I said it is fair, but I should have said it is a Christian duty; for charity obliges us to succour our neighbour when he requires our aid, and we can help him without grievous inconvenience. Now it is certain that amongst our neighbours are to be reckoned the souls in purgatory, who, although no longer living in this world, yet have not left the communion of saints. 'The souls of the pious dead,' says St. Augustine, 'are not separated from the Church,'³² and St. Thomas says more to our purpose, that the charity which is due to the dead who died in the grace of God is only an extension of the same charity which we owe to our neighbour while living: 'Charity, which is the bond that unites the members of the Church, extends not only to the living, but also to the dead who die in charity.' Therefore we ought to succour, according to our ability, those holy souls as our neighbours; and as their necessities are greater than those of our other

neighbours, for this reason our duty to succour them **seems** also to be greater.

But now what are the necessities of those holy prisoners? It is certain that their pains are immense. The fire that tortures them, says St. Augustine, is more exerceiating than any pain which man can endure in this life: 'That fire will be more painful than any thing that man can suffer in this life.'³³ St. Thomas **thinks** the same, and moreover supposes it to be identical with the fire of hell: 'The damned are tormented and the elect purified in the same fire.'³⁴ And this only relates to the pains of sense. But the pain of loss (that is the privation of the sight of God), which those holy souls suffer, is much greater; because not only their natural affection, but also the supernatural love of God wherewith they burn, draws them with such violence to be united with their Sovereign Good, that when they see the barrier which their sins have put in the way, they feel a pain so acute, that if they were capable of death, they could not live a moment. So that, as St. Chrysostom says, this pain of the privation of God tortures them incomparably more than the pain of sense: 'The flames of a thousand hells together could not inflict such torments as the pain of loss by itself.' So that those holy souls would rather suffer every other possible torture than be deprived for a single instant of the union with God for which they long. So St. Thomas says, that the pain of purgatory exceeds any thing that can be endured in this life: 'The pain of purgatory must exceed all pain of this life.'³⁵ And Dionysius the Carthusian relates, that a dead person, who had been raised to life by the intercession of St. Jerome, told St. Cyril of Jerusalem, that all the torments of this earth are refreshing and delightful compared to the very least pain of purgatory: 'If all the torments of the world were compared to the least that can be had in purgatory, they will rather appear comfortable.'³⁶ And he adds, that if a man had once tried those torments, he would rather suffer all the earthly sorrows that man can endure till the Day of Judgment, than suffer for one day the least pain of purgatory. Hence St. Cyril wrote to St. Augustine: 'That as far as regards the infliction of

suffering, these pains are the same as those of hell—their only difference being that they are not eternal.³⁷ Hence we see that the pains of these holy souls are excessive, while, on the other hand, they cannot help themselves; because, as Job says, “they are in chains, and are bound with the cords of poverty” (Job xxxvi. 8). They are destined to reign with Christ; but they are withheld from taking possession of their kingdom till the time of their purgation is accomplished. And they cannot help themselves (at least not sufficiently, even according to those theologians who assert that they can by their prayers gain some relief,) to throw off their chains, until they have entirely satisfied the justice of God. This is precisely what a Cistercian monk said to the sacristan of his monastery: ‘Help me, I beseech you, with your prayers; for of myself I can obtain nothing.’³⁸ And this is consonant with the saying of St Bonaventure: ‘Destitution prevents solvency.’³⁹ That is, those souls are so poor, that they have no means of making satisfaction.

On the other hand, since it is certain, and even of faith, that by our suffrages, and chiefly by our prayers, as particularly recommended and practised by the Church, we can relieve those holy souls, I do not know how to excuse that man from sin who neglects to give them some assistance, at least by his prayers. If a sense of duty will not persuade us to succour them, let us think of the pleasure it will give Jesus Christ to see us endeavouring to deliver His beloved spouses from prison, in order that He may have them with Him in paradise. Let us think of the store of merits which we can lay up by practising this great act of charity; let us think, too, that those souls are not ungrateful, and will never forget the great benefit we do them in relieving them of their pains, and in obtaining for them, by our prayers, an anticipation of their entrance into glory; so that when they are there, they will never neglect to pray for us. And if God promises mercy to him who practises mercy towards his neighbour—“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (St. Matt v. 7),—he may reasonably expect to be saved, who remembers to assist those souls, so afflicted, and yet so dear to God. Jonathan, after having saved the Hebrews from ruin by a victory over their enemies, was con-

demned to death by his father Saul for having tasted some honey against his express commands; but the people came before the king, and said, "Shall Jonathan then die, who hath wrought this great salvation to Israel?" (1 Kings xiv. 45.) So may we expect, that if any of us ever obtains, by his prayers, the liberation of a soul from purgatory, that soul will say to God: 'Lord, suffer not him who has delivered me from my torments to be lost.' And if Saul spared Jonathan's life at the request of his people, God will not refuse the salvation of a Christian to the prayers of a soul which is His own spouse. Moreover, St. Augustine says, that God will cause those who in this life have most succoured those holy souls, when they come to purgatory themselves, to be most succoured by others. I may here observe that, in practice, one of the best suffrages is to hear Mass for them, and during the holy Sacrifice to recommend them to God by the merits and passion of Jesus Christ. The following form may be used: 'Eternal Father, I offer Thee this Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, with all the pains which He suffered in His life and death; and by the merits of His Passion I recommend to Thee the souls in purgatory, and especially that of, &c.' And it is a very charitable act to recommend, at the same time, the souls of all those who are at the point of death.

Whatever doubt there may be whether or not the souls in purgatory can pray for us, and therefore whether or not it is of any use to recommend ourselves to their prayers, there can be no doubt whatever with regard to the saints. For it is certain that it is most useful to have recourse to the intercession of the saints canonised by the Church, who are already enjoying the vision of God. To suppose that the Church can err in canonizing is sin and heresy, according to St. Bonaventure, Bellarmine, and others; or at least next door to heresy, according to Suarez, Azorius, Gotti, &c.; because the Sovereign Pontiff, according to St. Thomas, is guided by the infallible influence of the Holy Ghost in an especial way when canonizing the saints.⁴⁰

But to return to the question just proposed—are we obliged to have recourse to the intercession of the saints? I do not wish to meddle with the decision of this question;

but I cannot omit the exposition of a doctrine of St. Thomas. In several places above quoted, and especially in his book on the Sentences,⁴¹ he expressly lays it down as certain that every one is bound to pray; because (as he asserts) in no other way can the graces necessary for salvation be obtained from God, except by prayer: 'Every man is bound to pray, from the fact that he is bound to procure spiritual good for himself, which can only be got from God; so it can only be obtained by asking it of God.' Then, in another place of the same book, he proposes the exact question, 'Whether we are bound to pray to the saints to intercede for us?' And he answers as follows—in order to catch his real meaning we will quote the entire passage—'According to Dionysius, the order which God has instituted for His creatures requires that things which are remote may be brought to God by means of things which are nearer to Him. Hence, as the saints in heaven are nearest of all to Him, the order of His law requires that we who, 'remaining in the body are absent from the Lord,' should be brought to Him by means of the saints; and this is effected by the Divine goodness pouring forth His gifts through them. And as the path of our return to God should correspond to the path of the good things which proceed from Him to us, it follows that, as the benefits of God come down to us by means of the suffrages of the saints, we ought to be brought to God by the same way, so that a second time we may receive His benefits by the mediation of the saints. Hence it is that we make them our intercessors with God, and as it were our mediators, when we ask them to pray for us.'⁴² Note well the words—'The order of God's law requires;' and especially note the last words—'As the benefits of God come down to us by means of the suffrages of the saints, in the same way we must be brought back to God, so that a second time we may receive His benefits by the mediation of the saints.' So that, according to St. Thomas the order of the Divine law requires that we mortals should be saved by means of the saints, in that we receive by their intercession the help necessary for our salvation. He then puts the objection, that it appears superfluous to have recourse to the saints, since God is infinitely more merciful than

they, and more ready to hear us ; to which he answers : ' That God has so ordered, not on account of any want of mercy on His part, but to keep the right order, which He has universally established, of working by means of second causes. It is not for want of His mercy, but to preserve the aforesaid order in the creation.'

In conformity with this doctrine of St. Thomas, the Continuator of Tournley and Sylvius write, that although God only is to be prayed to as the Author of grace, yet we are bound to have recourse also to the intercession of the saints, so as to observe the order which God has established with regard to our salvation ; which is, that the inferior should be saved by imploring the aid of the superior. ' By the law of nature we are bound to observe the order which God has appointed ; but God has appointed that the inferior should obtain salvation by imploring the assistance of his superior.'⁴³

And if this is true of the saints, much more is it true of the intercession of the Mother of God, whose prayers are certainly of more value in His sight than those of all the rest of the inhabitants of heaven together. For St. Thomas says, that the saints, in proportion to the merits by which they have obtained grace for themselves, are able also to save others ; but that Jesus Christ, and so also His Mother, have merited so much grace, that they can save all men. ' It is a great thing in any saint that he should have grace enough for the salvation of many besides himself ; but if he had enough for the salvation of all men, this would be the greatest of all ; and this is the case with Christ, and with the Blessed Virgin.'⁴⁴ And St. Bernard speaks thus to Mary : ' Through thee we have access to thy Son, O discoverer of grace and Mother of salvation, that through thee He may receive us, who through thee was given to us ;'⁴⁵ which words signify, that as we only have access to the Father by means of the Son, who is the Mediator of justice, so we only have access to the Son by means of the Mother, who is mediator of grace, and who obtains for us, by her intercession, the gifts which Jesus Christ has merited for us. And therefore St. Bernard says, in another place,⁴⁶ that Mary has received a twofold fulness

of grace. The first was the Incarnation of the Word, who was made Man in her most holy womb; the second is that fulness of grace which we receive from God by means of her prayers. Hence the saint adds: 'God has placed the fulness of all good in Mary, that if we have any hope, any grace, any salvation, we may know that it overflows from her who 'ascendeth abounding with delights.' She is a garden of delights, whose odours spread abroad and abound; that is, the gifts of graces.' So that whatever good we have from God, we receive all by the intercession of Mary. And why so? Because, says St. Bernard, it is God's will: 'Such is His will, who would have us receive every thing through Mary.' But the more precise reason is deduced from the expression of St. Augustine, that Mary is justly called our Mother, because she co-operated by her charity in the birth of the faithful to the life of grace, by which we become members of Jesus Christ, our head: 'But clearly she is the mother of His members (which we are); because she co-operated by her charity to the birth of the faithful in the Church, and they are members of that Head.'⁴⁷ Therefore, as Mary co-operated by her charity to the spiritual birth of the faithful, so also God willed that she should co-operate by her intercession to make them enjoy the life of grace in this world, and the life of glory in the next; and therefore the Church makes us call her and salute her, without any circumlocution, by the names, 'our life, our sweetness, and our hope'—'*vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.*'

Hence St. Bernard exhorts us to have continual recourse to the Mother of God; because her prayers are certain to be heard by her Son: 'Go to Mary, I say, without hesitation; the Son will hear the Mother.' And then he says: 'My children, she is the ladder of sinners, she is my chief confidence, she is the whole ground of my hope.'⁴⁸ He calls her 'ladder,' because, as you cannot mount the third step except you first put your foot on the second, nor can you arrive at the second except by the first, so you cannot come to God except by means of Jesus Christ, nor can you come to Christ except by means of His Mother. Then he calls her 'his greatest security, and the whole

ground of his hope ;' because, as he affirms, God wills that all the graces which He gives us should pass through the hands of Mary. And he concludes by saying, that we ought to ask all the graces which we desire through Mary; because she obtains whatever she seeks, and her prayers cannot be rejected. 'Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks she finds, and she cannot be disappointed.' The following saints teach the same as St. Bernard :—St. Ephrem, 'We have no other confidence than from thee, O purest Virgin!' St. Ildephonsus: 'All the good things which the Divine Majesty has determined to give them, He has determined to commit to thy hands; for to thee are intrusted the treasures and the wardrobes of grace.' St. Germanus: 'If thou desertest us, what will become of us, O life of Christians!' St. Peter Damian: 'In thy hands are all the treasures of the mercies of God' St. Antoninus: 'Who seeks without her aid, attempts to fly without wings.' St. Bernadine of Sienna: 'Thou art the dispenser of all graces; our salvation is in thy hands.' In another place, he not only says that all graces are transmitted to us by means of Mary, but he also asserts that the Blessed Virgin, from the time she became Mother of God, acquired a certain jurisdiction over all the graces which are given to us. 'Through the Virgin the vital graces are transfused from Christ, the Head, into His mystical Body. From the time when the Virgin Mother conceived in her womb the Word of God, she obtained a certain jurisdiction (if I may so speak) over every temporal procession of the Holy Ghost; so that no creature could obtain any grace from God except by the dispensation of His sweet Mother.' And he concludes: 'Therefore all gifts, virtues, and graces, are dispensed through her hands to whom she wills, and as she wills.' St. Bonaventure said the same: 'Since the whole Divine nature was in the womb of the Virgin, I do not fear to teach that she has a certain jurisdiction over all the streams of grace; as her womb was, as it were, an ocean of the Divine nature, whence all the streams of grace must emanate.' On the authority of these saints, many theologians have piously and reasonably defended the opinion, that

there is no grace given to us except by means of the intercession of Mary; so Mendoza, Vega, Paeiuechelli, Segneri, Poiré, Crasset, and others, as also the learned Alexander Natalis, who says: 'It is God's will that we should look to Him for all good things, to be procured by the most powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin, when we invoke her, as is fit.'⁴⁹ And he quotes in confirmation the passage of St. Bernard: 'Such is His will, who has determined that we should receive all through Mary.' Contenson says the same, in a comment on the words addressed by Jesus on the cross to St. John, 'Behold thy Mother:' 'As though He had said, 'No one shall be partaker of My Blood except by the intercession of My Mother. My wounds are fountains of grace; but their streams shall flow to no one, except through the canal of Mary. O my disciple John, I will love you as you love her!'⁵⁰ For the rest, it is certain, that if God is pleased by our having recourse to the saints, He will be much more pleased by our availing ourselves of the intercession of Mary, that she, by her merits, may compensate for our unworthiness, according to the words of St. Anselm: 'That the dignity of the intercessor may supply for our poverty. So that, to invoke the Virgin, is not to distrust God's mercy, but to fear our own unworthiness.'⁵¹ St. Thomas, speaking of her dignity, calls it, as it were, infinite: 'From the fact of her being Mother of God, she has a certain infinite dignity.'⁵² So that it may be said with reason, that the prayers of Mary have more power with God than those of all heaven together.

Let us conclude this first point with the gist of all that has been said hitherto. He who prays is certainly saved. He who prays not is certainly damned. All the blessed (except infants) have been saved by prayer. All the damned have been lost through not praying; if they had prayed, they would not have been lost. And this is, and will be, their greatest torment in hell, to think how easily they might have been saved, only by asking God for His grace; but that now it is too late,—the time of prayer is gone.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE VALUE OF PRAYER.

OUR prayers are so dear to God, that He has appointed the angels to present them to Him as soon as they come forth from our mouths. 'The angels,' says St. Hilary, 'preside over the prayers of the faithful, and offer them daily to God.'⁵³ This is that smoke of the incense, which are the prayers of saints, which St. John saw ascending to God from the hand of the angel (Apoc. viii. 4); and which he saw in another place represented by golden phials full of sweet odours, very acceptable to God. But in order to understand better the value of prayers in God's sight, it is sufficient to read the innumerable promises which God makes to the man that prays both in the Old and New Testaments. "Cry to Me, and I will hear thee" (Jer. xxxiii. 3). "Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee" (Ps. iv. 15). "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (St. Matt. vii. 7). "He shall give good things to them that ask Him" (St. Matt. vii. 11). "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth" (St. Luke xi. 10). "Whatsoever they shall ask it shall be done for them by My Father" (St. Matt. xviii. 19). "All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive them, and they shall come unto you" (St. Mark xi. 24). "If you ask Me any thing in My name, that will I do" (St. John xiv. 13). "You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (St. John xv. 7). "Amen, amen, I say unto you, if you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). There are a thousand similar texts; but it would take too long to quote them.

God wills us to be saved; but for our greater good, He wills us to be saved as conquerors. While, therefore, we remain here, we have to live in a continual warfare; and if we would be saved, we have to fight and conquer. 'No one can be crowned without victory,' says St. Chrysostom.⁵⁴ We are very feeble, and our enemies are many and mighty; how

shall we be able to stand against them, or to defeat them? Let us take courage, and say with the Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). By prayer we can do all things; for by this means God will give us that strength which we want. Theodoret says, that prayer is omnipotent; it is but one, yet it can do all things: 'Though prayer is one, it can do all things.' And St. Bonaventure asserted, that by prayer we obtain every good, and escape every evil: 'By it is obtained the gain of every good, and liberation from every evil' St. Laurence Justinian said, that by means of prayer we build for ourselves a strong tower, where we shall be secure from all the snares and assaults of our enemies: 'By the exercise of prayer man is able to erect a citadel for himself.'⁵⁵ The powers of hell are mighty, says St. Bernard; but 'prayer is stronger than all the devils.'⁵⁶ Yes; for by prayer the soul obtains God's help, which is stronger than any created power. Thus David encouraged himself in his alarms: "Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies" (Ps. clxv.). For, as St. Chrysostom says, 'prayer is a strong weapon, a defence, a port, and a treasure.'⁵⁷ It is a weapon sufficient to overcome every assault of the devil; it is a defence to preserve us in every danger; it is a port where we may be safe in every tempest; and it is at the same time a treasure which provides us with every good.

God knows the great good which it does us to be obliged to pray, and therefore permits us (as we have already shown in the previous chapter) to be assaulted by our enemies, in order that we may ask Him for the help which He offers and promises to us. But as He is pleased when we run to Him in our dangers, so is He displeased when He sees us neglectful of prayer. As the king, says St. Bonaventure, would think it infidelity in an officer, when his post was attacked, not to ask him for reinforcements, 'he would be reputed a traitor if he did not request help from the king';⁵⁸ so God thinks Himself betrayed by the man who, when he finds himself surrounded by temptations, does not run to Him for assistance. For He desires to help us; and only waits to be asked, and then gives

abundant succour. This is strikingly shown by Isaias, when, on God's part, he told the king Achaz to ask some sign to certify himself of God's readiness to help him: "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God" (Is. vii. 11). The faithless king answered: "I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord;" for he trusted in his own power to overcome his enemies without God's aid. And for this the Prophet reprovèd him: "Hear, therefore, O house of David; is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also?" because that man is grievous and offensive to God who will not ask Him for the graces which He offers.

"Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). 'My poor children,' says our Saviour, 'though you find yourselves assailed by enemies, and oppressed with the weight of your sins, do not lose heart, but have recourse to Me in prayer, and I will give you strength to resist, and I will give you a remedy for all your disasters.' In another place He says, by the mouth of Isaias, "Come and accuse Me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow" (Is. i. 18). O men, come to Me; though your consciences are horribly defiled, yet come; I even give you leave to reproach Me (so to speak), if after you have had recourse to Me. I do not give you grace to become white as snow. What a thing is prayer? It is, as St. Chrysostom says, 'the anchor of those tossed on the sea, the treasure of the poor, the cure of diseases, the safeguard of health.' It is a secure anchor for him who is in peril of shipwreck; it is a treasury of immense wealth for him who is poor; it is a most efficacious medicine for him who is sick; and it is a certain preservative for him who would keep himself well. What does prayer? Let us hear St. Laurence Justinian: 'It pleases God, it gets what it asks, it overcomes enemies, it changes men.'⁵⁹ It appeases the wrath of God, who pardons all who pray with humility. It obtains every grace that is asked for; it vanquishes all the strength of the tempter, and it changes men from blind into seeing, from weak into strong, from sinners into saints. Let him who wants light ask it of God, and it shall be given: 'As

soon as I had recourse to God,' says Solomon, 'He granted me wisdom:' "I called upon God, and the Spirit of wisdom came to me" (Wisd. vii. 7). Let him who wants fortitude ask it of God, and it shall be given. 'As soon as I opened my mouth to pray,' says David, 'I received help from God:' "I opened my mouth, and drew in the Spirit" (Ps. cxviii. 131). And how in the world did the martyrs obtain their strength to resist tyrants, except by prayer, which gave them force to overcome tortures and death?

'He who uses this great weapon,' says St. Chrysostom, 'knows not death, leaves the earth, enters heaven, lives with God.'⁶⁰ He falls not into sin; he loses affection for the earth; he makes his abode in heaven; and begins, even in this life, to enjoy the conversation of God. How then can you disquiet such a man by saying, 'How do you know that you are written in the book of life?' 'How do you know whether God will give you efficacious grace, and the gift of perseverance?' "Be nothing solicitous," says St. Paul, "but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be known unto God" (Phil. iv. 6). What is the use, says the Apostle, of agitating yourselves with these miseries and fears? Drive from you all these cares, which are of no use but to lessen your confidence, and to make you more tepid and slothful in walking along the way of salvation. Pray and seek always, and make your prayers sound in God's ears, and thank Him for having promised to give you the gifts which you desire whenever you ask for them, namely, efficacious grace, perseverance, salvation, and every thing which you desire. The Lord has given us our post in the battle against powerful foes; but He is faithful in His promises, and will never allow us to be assaulted more violently than we can resist. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able." He is faithful, since He instantly succours the man who invokes Him. The learned Cardinal Gotti writes, that God has bound Himself not only to give us a grace precisely balancing the temptation that assails us, but that He is obliged, when we are tempted, and have recourse to Him, to afford us, by means of that

grace which is kept ready for and offered to all, sufficient strength for us actually to resist the temptation : ' God is bound, when we are tempted, and fly to His protection, to give us by the grace prepared and offered to all such strength as will not only put us in the way of being able to resist, but will also make us resist ; " for we can do all things in Him who strengthens us " by His grace, if we humbly ask for it.'⁶¹ We can do all things with God's help, which is granted to every one who humbly seeks it ; so that we have no excuse when we allow ourselves to be overcome by a temptation. We are conquered solely by our own fault, because we would not pray. By prayer all the snares and power of the devil are easily overcome. ' By prayer all hurtful things are chased away,' says St. Augustine.⁶²

St. Bernadine of Sienna says, that prayer is a faithful ambassador, well known to the King of Heaven, and having the *entrée* of His private chamber, and able by his importunity to induce the merciful heart of the King to grant every aid to us His wretched creatures, groaning in the midst of our conflicts and miseries in this valley of tears : ' Prayer is a most faithful messenger, known to the King, who is used to enter His chamber, and by his importunity to influence the merciful mind of the King, and to obtain us assistance in our toils.'⁶³ Isaias also assures us, that as soon as the Lord hears our prayers, He is moved with compassion towards us ; and does not leave us to cry long to Him, but instantly replies, and grants us what we ask : " Weeping, thou shalt not weep ; He will surely have pity upon thee : the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee " (Is. xxx. 19). In another place He complains of us by the mouth of Jeremias : " Am I become a wilderness to Israel, or a lateward springing land ? Why then have My people said, we are revolted, and will come to Thee no more ! " (Jer. ii. 31.) Why do you say that you will no more have recourse to Me ? Has My mercy become to you a barren land, which can yield you no fruits of grace ? or a cold soil, which yields its fruit too late ? So has our loving Lord assured us that He never neglects

to hear us, and to hear us instantly when we pray ; and so does He reproach those who neglect to pray through distrust of being heard.

If God were to allow us to present our petitions to Him once a month, even this would be a great favour. The kings of the earth give audiences a few times in the year, but God gives a continual audience. St. Chrysostom writes, that God is always waiting to hear our prayers, and that a case never occurred when He neglected to hear a petition offered to Him properly : ‘ God is always prepared for the voice of His servants, nor did He ever, when called upon as He ought to be, neglect to hear.’⁶⁴ And in another place he says, that when we pray to God, before we have finished recounting to Him our supplications, He has already heard us : ‘ It is always obtained, even while we are yet praying.’ We even have the promise of God to do this : “ As they are yet speaking, I will hear ” (Is. lxi. 24). The Lord, says David, stands near to every one who prays, to console, to hear, and to save him : “ The Lord is nigh to all them that call upon Him ; to all that call upon Him in truth ” (that is, as they ought to call) “ He will do the will of them that fear Him ; and He will hear their prayer, and will save them ” (Ps. cxliv. 19). This it was in which Moses gloried, when he said : “ There is not another nation so great, that has gods so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions ” (Deut. iv. 7). The gods of the Gentiles were deaf to those who invoked them, for they were wretched fabrications, which could do nothing. But our God, who is Almighty, is not deaf to our prayers, but always stands near the man who prays, ready to grant him all the graces which he asks : “ In what day soever I shall call upon Thee, behold I know that Thou art my God ” (Ps. lv. 10). Lord, says the Psalmist, hereby do I know that Thou, my God, art all goodness and mercy, in that, whenever I have recourse to Thee, Thou dost instantly help me.

We are so poor that we have nothing ; but if we pray we are no longer poor. If we are poor, God is rich ; and God, as the Apostle says, is all liberality to him that calls for His aid : “ Rich unto all who call upon Him ” (Rom. x. 12). Since, therefore (as St. Augustine exhorts us), we

have to do with a Lord of infinite power and infinite riches, let us not go to Him for little and valueless things, but let us ask some great thing of Him: 'You seek from the Almighty,—seek something great.' If a man went to a king to ask some trumpery coin, like a farthing, methinks that man would but insult his king. On the other hand, we honour God, we honour His mercy, and His liberality, when, though we see how miserable we are, and how unworthy of any kindness, we yet ask for great graces, trusting in the goodness of God, and in His faithfulness to His promises of granting to the man who prays whatever grace he asks: "Whatsoever you will, ask, and it shall be done unto you" (St. John xv. 7). St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said, 'that God feels Himself so honoured, and is so delighted when we ask for His grace, that He is, in a certain sense, grateful to us; because when we do this we seem to open to Him a way to do us a kindness, and to satisfy His nature, which is to do good to all.' And let us be sure that, when we seek God's grace, He always gives us more than we ask: "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not." (St. James i. 5). Thus speaks St. James, to show us that God is not like men, parsimonious of His goods; men, though rich and liberal, when they give alms, are always somewhat close-handed, and generally give less than is asked of them, because their wealth, however great it be, is always finite; so that the more they give the less they have. But God, when He is asked, gives his good things 'abundantly,' that is, with a generous hand, always giving more than is asked, because His wealth is infinite, and the more He gives, the more He has to give: "For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild; and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee" (Ps. lxxxv. 5). Thou, O my God, said David, art but too liberal and kind to him that invokes Thee; the mercies which Thou pourest upon him are superabundant, above all he asks.

On this point, then, we have to fix all our attention, namely, to pray with confidence, feeling sure that by prayer all the treasures of heaven are thrown open to us. 'Let us attend to this,' says St. Chrysostom, 'and we shall open

heaven to ourselves.' Prayer is a treasure ; he who prays most receives most. St. Bonaventure says, that every time a man has recourse to God by fervent prayer, he gains good things that are of more value than the whole world : 'Any day a man gains more by devout prayer than the whole world is worth.'⁶⁵ Some devout souls spend a great deal of time in reading and in meditating, but pay little attention to prayer. There is no doubt that spiritual reading, and meditation on the eternal truths, are very useful things ; 'but,' says St. Augustine, 'it is of much more use to pray.' By reading and meditation we learn our duty ; but by prayer we obtain the grace to do it. 'It is better to pray than to read : by reading we know what we ought to do ; by prayer we receive what we ask.'⁶⁶ What is the use of knowing our duty, and then not doing it, but to make us more guilty in God's sight ? Read and meditate as we like, we shall never satisfy our obligations, unless we ask of God the grace to fulfil them.

And, therefore, as St. Isidore observes, the devil is never more busy to distract us with the thoughts of worldly cares, than when he perceives us praying and asking God for grace : 'Then most does the devil insinuate thoughts, when he sees a man praying.'⁶⁷ And why ? Because the enemy sees that at no other time do we gain so many treasures of heavenly goods, as when we pray. This is the chief fruit of mental prayer, to ask God for the graces which we need for perseverance and for eternal salvation ; and chiefly for this reason it is that mental prayer is morally necessary for the soul, to enable it to preserve itself in the grace of God. For if a person does not remember in the time of meditation to ask for the help necessary for his perseverance, he will not do so at any other time ; for without meditation he will not think of asking for it, and will not even think of the necessity for asking it. On the other hand, he who makes his meditation every day, will easily see the needs of his soul, its dangers, and the necessity of his prayer ; and so he will pray, and will obtain the graces which will enable him to persevere, and save his soul. Father Segneri said of himself, that when he began to meditate, he aimed rather at exciting

affections than at making prayers. But when he came to know the necessity and the immense utility of prayer, he more and more applied himself, in his long mental prayer, to making petitions.

“As a young swallow, so will I cry,” said the devout king Hezekias (Is. xxxviii. 14). The young of the swallow does nothing but cry to its mother for help and for food; so should we all do, if we would preserve our life of grace. We should be always crying to God for aid to avoid the death of sin, and to advance in His holy love. Father Rodriguez relates, that the ancient fathers, who were our first instructors in the spiritual life, held a conference together to determine which was the exercise most useful and most necessary for eternal salvation; and that they determined it was to repeat over and over again the short prayer of David, ‘Incline unto my aid, O God!’ ‘This,’ says Cassian, ‘is what every one ought to do who wishes to be saved: he ought to be always saying, My God help me! my God help me!’ We ought to do this the first thing when we wake in the morning; and then to continue doing it in all our needs, and in setting about all our business, whether spiritual or temporal; and most especially when we find ourselves troubled by any temptation or passion. St. Bonaventure says, that at times we obtain a grace sooner by a short prayer than by many other good works: ‘Sometimes a man can sooner obtain by a short prayer what he would be a long time obtaining by pious works.’⁶⁸ St. Ambrose says, that he who prays, while he is praying obtains what he asks, because the very act of prayer is the same as receiving: ‘He who asks of God, while he asks receives; for to ask is to receive.’⁶⁹ Hence St. Chrysostom wrote, that ‘there is nothing more powerful than a man who prays,’ because such a one is made partaker of the power of God. To arrive at perfection, said St. Bernard, we must meditate and pray: by meditation we see what we want; by prayer we receive what we want. ‘Let us mount by meditation and prayer: the one teaches what is deficient, the other obtains that there should be nothing deficient.’⁷⁰

In sum, to save one’s soul without prayer is most

difficult, and even (as we have seen) impossible, according to the ordinary course of God's providence. But by praying our salvation is made secure, and very easy. It is not necessary for salvation to go among the heathen, and give up our life. It is not necessary to retire into the desert, and eat nothing but herbs. What does it cost us to say, My God, help me ! Lord, assist me ! have mercy on me ! Is there any thing more easy than this ? and this little will suffice to save us, if we will be diligent in doing it. St. Laurence Justinian specially exhorts us to oblige ourselves to say a prayer at least when we commence any action : ' We must endeavour to put up a prayer at least in the beginning of every work.' Cassian attests that the principal advice of the ancient fathers was to have recourse to God with short but frequent prayers. Let no one, says St. Bernard, think lightly of prayer, because God values it, and then gives us either what we ask, or what is still more useful to us : ' Let no one undervalue his prayer, for God does not undervalue it. . . . he will give either what we ask, or what he knows to be better.'⁷¹ And let us understand, that if we do not pray, we have no excuse, because the grace of prayer is given to every one. It is in our power to pray whenever we will, as David said of himself : " With me is prayer to the God of my life ; I will say to God, Thou art my support" (Ps. xli. 9, 10). On this point I shall speak at length in the second part, where I will make it quite clear that God gives to all the grace of prayer, in order that thereby they may obtain every help, and even more than they need, for keeping the Divine law, and for persevering till death. At present, I will only say, that if we are not saved, the whole fault will be ours ; and we shall have our own failure to answer for, because we did not pray.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

“AMEN, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father ~~any~~ thing in My name, He will give it you” (St. John xvi 23). Jesus Christ then has promised, that whatever we ask His Father in His name, His Father will give us. But always with the understanding that we ask under the proper conditions. Many seek, says St. James, and obtain not, because they seek improperly : “Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss” (St. James iv. 3). So St. Basil, following out the argument of the Apostle, says, ‘You sometimes ask and receive not, because you have asked badly ; either without faith, or with levity ; or you have requested things not fit for you, or you have not persevered ;’⁷² ‘faithlessly,’ that is, with little faith, or little confidence ; ‘lightly,’ with little desire of the grace you ask ; ‘things not fit for you,’ when you seek good things that will not be conducive to your salvation ; or you have left off praying, without perseverance. Hence St. Thomas reduces to four the conditions required in prayer, in order that it may procure its effect : these are, that a man asks (1) *for himself* ; (2) *things necessary for salvation* ; (3) *piously* ; and (4) *with perseverance*.

The first condition then of prayer is, that you make it *for yourself* ; because St. Thomas holds,⁷³ that one man cannot *ex condigno* (*i. e.* in the fitness of things) obtain for another eternal life ; nor, consequently, even those *graces* which are requisite for his salvation. Since, as he says, the promise is made not to others, but only to those that pray : ‘He shall give to you.’ Nevertheless, there are many theologians, Corn. à Lapide, Sylvester, Tolet, Habert, and others,⁷⁴ who hold the opposite doctrine, on the authority of St. Basil, who teaches that prayer, in virtue of God’s promise, is infallibly efficacious, even for those for whom we pray, provided they put no positive impediment in the way. And they support their doctrine by Scripture : “Pray one for another, that you may be saved ; for the con-

tinual prayer of the just man availeth much" (St. James v. 16). "Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (St. Matt. v. 24). And better still, on the text of St. John: "He that knoweth his brother to sin a sin which is not to death, let him ask, and life shall be given to him who sinneth not unto death. There is a sin unto death; for that I say not that any man ask" (1 St. John v. 16). St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, the Ven. Bede, and others,⁷⁵ explain the words 'who sinneth not unto death' to mean, provided the sinner is not one who intends to remain obstinate till death; since for such a one a very extraordinary grace would be required. But for other sinners, who are not guilty of such malice, the Apostle promises their conversion to him who prays for them: 'Let him ask, and life shall be given him for him that sinneth.'

Besides, it is quite certain that the prayers of others are of great use to sinners, and are very pleasing to God; and God complains of His servants who do not recommend sinners to Him, as He once complained to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, to whom He said one day, 'See, My daughter, how the Christians are in the devil's hands; if My elect did not deliver them by their prayers they would be devoured.' But God especially requires this of priests and religious. The same saint used to say to her nuns, 'My sisters, God has not separated us from the world, that we should only do good for ourselves, but also that we should appease Him in behalf of sinners;' and God one day said to her, 'I have given to you My chosen spouses the City of Refuge (*i. e.* the Passion of Jesus Christ), that you may have a place where you may obtain help for My creatures. Therefore have recourse to it, and thence stretch forth a helping hand to My creatures who are perishing, and lay down your lives for them.' For this reason the saint, inflamed with holy zeal, used to offer God the Blood of the Redeemer fifty times a day in behalf of sinners, and was quite wasted away for the desire she had of their conversion. Oh, she used to say, what pain is it, O Lord, to see how one could help Thy creatures by giving one's life for them, and not be able to do so! For the rest, in every exercise she recommended sinners to God; and it is writ-

ten in her life, that she scarcely passed an hour in the day without praying for them : frequently, too, she arose in the middle of the night, and went to the Blessed Sacrament to pray for them ; and yet for all this, when she was once found bathed in tears, on being asked the cause, she answered, ‘ Because I seem to myself to do nothing for the salvation of sinners.’ She went so far as to offer to endure even the pains of hell for their conversion, provided that in that place she might still love God ; and often God gratified her by inflicting on her grievous pains and infirmities for the salvation of sinners. She prayed especially for priests, seeing that their good life was the occasion of salvation to others, while their bad life was the cause of ruin to many ; and therefore she prayed God to visit their faults upon her, saying, ‘ Lord, make me die and return to life again as many times as is necessary to satisfy Thy justice for them !’ And it is related in her life, that the saint, by her prayers, did indeed release many souls from the hands of Lucifer.

I wished to speak rather particularly of the zeal of this saint ; but, indeed, no souls that really love God neglect to pray for poor sinners. For how is it possible for a person who loves God, and knows what love He has for our souls, and what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for their salvation, and how our Saviour desires us to pray for sinners,—how is it possible, I say, that he should be able to look with indifference on the numbers of poor souls who are living without God, slaves of hell, without being moved to importune God with frequent prayers to give light and strength to these wretched beings, so that they may come out from the miserable state of living death in which they are slumbering ? True it is that God has not promised to grant our requests, when those for whom we pray put a positive impediment in the way of their conversion ; but still, God of His goodness has often deigned, at the prayer of His servants, to bring back the most blinded and obstinate sinners to a state of salvation, by means of extraordinary graces. Therefore let us never omit, when we say or hear Mass, when we receive the Holy Communion, when we **make** our meditation or our visit to the Blessed Sacrament,

to recommend poor sinners to God. And a learned author says, that he who prays for others will find that his prayers for himself are heard much sooner. But this is a digression. Let us now return to the examination of the other conditions which St. Thomas lays down as necessary to the efficacy of prayer. The second condition assigned by the saint is, that we ask those favours which are *necessary to salvation*; because the promise annexed to prayer was not made with reference to temporal favours, which are not necessary for the salvation of the soul. St. Augustine, explaining the words of the gospel, "whatever ye shall ask in My name," says, that "nothing which is asked in a way detrimental to salvation is asked in the name of the Saviour."⁷⁶ Sometimes, says the same father, we seek some temporal favours, and God does not hear us; but He does not hear us because He loves us, and wishes to be merciful to us. 'A man may pray faithfully for the necessities of this life, and God may mercifully refuse to hear him; because the physician knows better than the patient what is good for the sick man.' The physician who loves his patient will not allow him to have those things which he sees would do him harm. Oh, how many, if they had been sick or poor, would have escaped those sins which they commit in health and in affluence! And, therefore, when men ask God for health or riches, He often denies them because He loves them, knowing that these things would be to them an occasion of losing His grace, or at any rate of growing tepid in the spiritual life. Not that we mean to say that it is any defect to pray to God for the necessities of this present life, so far as they are not inconsistent with our eternal salvation, as the Wise Man said, "Give me only the necessities of life" (Prov. xxx. 8); nor is it a defect, says St. Thomas,⁷⁷ to have anxiety about such goods, if it is not inordinate. The defect consists in desiring and seeking these temporal goods, and in having an inordinate anxiety about them, as if they were our highest good. Therefore, when we ask of God these temporal favours, we ought always to ask them with resignation, and with the condition, if they will be useful to our souls; and when we see that God does not grant them, let us be certain that He

then denies them to us for the love He bears us, and because He sees that they would be injurious to the salvation of our souls.

It often happens that we pray God to deliver us from some dangerous temptation, and yet that God does not hear us, but permits the temptation to continue troubling us. In such a case, let us understand that God permits even this for our **greater** good. It is not temptation or bad thoughts that separate us from God, but our consent to the evil. When a soul in temptation recommends herself to God, and by His aid resists, oh, how she then advances in perfection, and unites herself more closely to God ! and this is the reason why God does not hear her. St. Paul prayed instantly to be delivered from the temptation of impurity : " There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me ; for which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me." But God answered him, that it was enough to have His grace : " My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 7-9). So that even in temptations we ought to pray with resignation, saying, Lord, deliver me from this trouble, if it is expedient to deliver me ; and if not, at least give me help to resist. And here comes in what St. Bernard says, that when we beg any grace of God, He either gives us that which we ask, or some other more useful to us. He often leaves us to be buffeted by the waves, in order to try our faithfulness, and for our greater profit. It seems then that He is deaf to our prayers. But no ; let us be sure that God then really hears us, and secretly aids us, and strengthens us by His grace to resist all the assaults of our enemies. See how He himself assures us of this by the mouth of the Psalmist : " Thou calledst upon me in affliction, and I delivered thee : I heard thee in the secret place of tempest ; I proved thee at the waters of contradiction" (Ps. lxxx. 8).

The other conditions assigned by St. Thomas to prayer are, that it is to be made *piously* and *perseveringly* ; *by piously*, he means with humility and confidence—by *perseveringly*, continuing to pray until death. We must now speak distinctly of each of these three conditions, which are the

most necessary for prayer, namely of humility, confidence, and perseverance.

§ 1. OF THE HUMILITY WITH WHICH WE SHOULD PRAY.

The Lord does indeed regard the prayers of His servants, but only of His servants who are humble. "He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble" (Ps. ci. 18). Others He does not regard, but rejects them: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (St. Jas. iv. 6). He does not hear the prayers of the proud who trust in their own strength; but for that reason leaves them to their own feebleness; and in this state, deprived of God's aid, they must certainly perish. David had to bewail this case: "Before I was humbled I offended" (Ps. cxviii. 67). I sinned because I was not humble. The same thing happened to St. Peter, who, though he was warned by our Lord that all the disciples would abandon Him on that night—"All you shall be scandalised in Me this night" (St. Matt. xxvi. 31)—nevertheless, instead of acknowledging his own weakness, and begging our Lord's aid against his unfaithfulness, was too confident in his own strength, and said, that though all should abandon Him, He would never leave Him: "Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, I will never be scandalised." And although our Saviour again foretold to him in a special manner, that in that very night, before the cock-crow, he should deny Him three times; yet, trusting in his own courage, he boasted, saying, "Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee." But what came of it? Scarcely had the unhappy man entered the house of the high-priest, when he was accused of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, and three times did he deny with an oath that he had ever known Him: "And again he denied with an oath, that I know not the Man." If Peter had humbled himself, and had asked our Lord for the grace of constancy, he would not have denied Him.

We ought all to feel that we are standing on the edge of a precipice, suspended over the abyss of all sins, and supported only by the thread of God's grace. If this

thread fails us, we shall certainly fall into the gulf, and shall commit the most horrible wickedness. "Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell" (Ps. xciii. 17). If God had not succoured me, I should have fallen into a thousand sins, and now I should be in hell. So said the Psalmist, and so ought each of us to say. This is what St Francis of Assisi meant, when he said that he was the worst sinner in the world. But, my father, said his companion, what you say is not true; there are many in the world who are certainly worse than you are. Yes, what I say is but too true, answered St. Francis; because if God did not keep His hand over me, I should commit every possible sin.

It is of faith, that without the aid of grace we cannot do any good work, nor even think a good thought. 'Without grace men do no good whatever, either in thought or in deed,' said St. Augustine.⁷⁸ As the eye cannot see without light, so, said the holy father, man can do no good without grace. The Apostle had said the same thing before him: "Not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. iii. 5). And David had said it before St. Paul: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. cxxvi. 1). In vain does man weary himself to become a saint, unless God lends a helping hand: "Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it" (Ps. xliii. 7). If God did not preserve the soul from sins, in vain will she try to preserve herself by her own strength: and therefore did the holy prophet protest, "I will not trust in my bow." I will not hope in my arms; but only in God, who alone can save me.

Hence, whoever finds that he has done any good, and does not find that he has fallen into greater sins than those which are commonly committed, let him say with St. Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10); and for the same reason, he ought never to cease to be afraid of falling on every occasion of sin: "Wherefore, he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12). St. Paul wishes to warn us that he who feels secure of not falling, is in great danger of falling;

and he assigns the reason in another place, where he says, "If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. vi. 3). So that St. Augustine wrote wisely, 'the presumption of stability renders many unstable; no one will be so firm as he who feels himself infirm.'⁷⁹ If a man says he has no fear, it is a sign that he trusts in himself, and in his good resolutions; but such a man, with his mischievous confidence, deceives himself, because, through trust in his own strength, he neglects to fear; and through not fearing he neglects to recommend himself to God, and then he will certainly fall. And so, for like reasons, we should all abstain from noticing with any vain-glory the sins of other people; but rather we should then esteem ourselves as worse in ourselves than they are, and should say, 'Lord, if Thou hadst not helped me, I should have done worse.' Otherwise, to punish us for our pride, God will permit us to fall into worse and more shameful sins. For this cause St. Paul instructs us to labour for our salvation; but how? always in fear and trembling: "With fear and trembling work out your salvation" (Phil. ii. 12). Yes; for he who has a great fear of falling, distrusts his own strength, and therefore, places his confidence in God, and will have recourse to Him in dangers; and God will aid him, and so he will vanquish his temptations, and will be saved. St. Philip Neri, walking one day through Rome, kept saying, 'I am in despair!' A certain religious chid him, and the saint thereupon said, 'My father, I am in despair for myself; but I trust in God.' So must we do, if we would be saved; we must always live in despair of doing any thing by our own strength; and in so doing we shall imitate St. Philip, who used to say to God the first moment he woke in the morning, 'Lord, keep Thy hands over Philip this day; for if not, Philip will betray Thee.'

This, then, we may conclude with St. Augustine, is all the grand science of a Christian,—to know that he is nothing, and can do nothing. 'This is the whole of the great science, to know that man is nothing.'⁸⁰ For then he will never neglect to furnish himself, by prayer to God, with that strength which he has not of himself, and which

he needs in order to resist temptations, and to do good; and so, with the help of God, who never refuses any thing to the man who prays to Him with humility, he will be able to do all things: "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart until the Most High behold" (Eccles. xxxv. 21). The prayer of a humble soul penetrates the heavens, and presents itself before the throne of God; and departs not without God's looking on it and hearing it. And though the soul be guilty of any amount of sin, God never despises a heart that humbles itself: "A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. l. 19); "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (St. James iv. 6). As the Lord is severe with the proud, and resists their prayers, so is He kind and liberal to the humble. This is precisely what Jesus Christ said one day to St. Catherine of Sienna: "Know, my daughter, that a soul which perseveres in humble prayer gains every virtue."⁸¹

It will be of use to introduce here the advice which the learned and pious Palafox, Bishop of Osma, gives to spiritual persons who desire to become saints. It occurs in a note to the 18th letter of St. Teresa, which she wrote to her confessor, to give him an account of all the grades of supernatural prayer with which God had favoured her. On this the bishop writes, that these supernatural graces which God designed to grant to St. Teresa, as He has also done to other saints, are not necessary in order to arrive at sanctity, since many souls have become saints without them; and, on the other hand, many have arrived at sanctity, and yet have, after all, been damned. Therefore he says it is superfluous, and even presumptuous, to desire and ask for these supernatural gifts, when the true and only way to become a saint is, to exercise ourself in virtue and in the love of God; and this is done by means of prayer, and by corresponding to the inspirations and assistance of God, who wishes nothing so much as to see us saints. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess. iv. 3).

Hence Bishop Palafox, speaking of the grades of supernatural prayer mentioned in St. Teresa's letter, namely, the prayer of quiet, the sleep or suspension of the faculties,

the prayer of union, ecstasy or rapture, flight and impetus of the spirit, and the wound of love, says very wisely, that as regards the *prayer of quiet*, what we ought to ask of God is, that He would free us from attachment to, and desire of, worldly goods, which give no peace, but bring disquiet and affliction to the soul: "Vanity of vanities," as Solomon well called them, "and vexation of spirit" (Eccles. i. 14). The heart of man will never find true peace, if it does not empty itself of all that is not God, so as to leave itself all free for His love, that He alone may possess the whole of it. But this the soul cannot do of itself; it must obtain it of God by repeated prayers. As regards the *sleep and suspension of the faculties*, we ought to ask God for grace to keep them asleep for all that is temporal, and only awake to consider God's goodness, and to set our hearts upon His love and eternal happiness. As regards the *union of the faculties*, let us pray Him to give us grace not to think, nor to seek, nor to wish any thing but what God wills; since all sanctity and the perfection of love consists in uniting our will with the will of God. As regards *ecstasy and rapture*, let us pray God to draw us out from the inordinate love of ourselves and of creatures, and to draw us entirely to Himself. As regards the *flight of the spirit*, let us pray Him to give us grace to live altogether detached from this world, and to do as the swallows, which do not settle on the ground even to feed, but take their food flying;—so should we use our temporal goods for all that is necessary for the support of life, but always flying, without settling on the ground to look for earthly pleasures. As regards *impulse of spirit*, let us pray Him to give us courage and strength to do violence to ourselves, whenever it is necessary, for resisting the assaults of our enemies, for conquering our passions, and for accepting sufferings even in the midst of desolation and dryness of spirit. Finally, as regards the *wound of love*, as a wound by its pain perpetually renews the remembrance of what we suffer, so ought we to pray God to wound our hearts with His holy love in such a way that we shall always be reminded of His goodness and the love which He has borne us; and thus we should live in continual love of Him, and should

be always pleasing Him with our works and our affections. But none of these graces can be obtained without prayer ; and with prayer, provided it be humble, confident, and persevering, all are obtained.

§ 2. OF THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH WE OUGHT TO PRAY.

The principal instruction that St. James gives us, if we wish by prayer to obtain grace from God, is, that we pray with a confidence which feels sure of being heard, and without hesitating : "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (St. James i. 6). St. Thomas teaches, that as prayer receives its power of meriting from charity, so, on the other hand, it receives its power of being efficacious to obtain from faith and confidence : 'Prayer has its power of meriting from charity, but its efficacy of obtaining from faith and confidence.'⁸² St. Bernard teaches the same, saying, that it is our confidence alone which obtains for us the Divine mercies : 'Hope alone obtains a place of mercy with Thee, O Lord.'⁸³ God is much pleased with our confidence in His mercy, because we then honour and exalt that infinite goodness which it was His object in creating us to manifest to the world : "Let all those, O my God," said the royal prophet, "who hope in Thee be glad; for they shall be eternally happy, and Thou shalt dwell in them" (Ps. v. 12). "Let all them be glad that hope in Thee; they shall rejoice for ever, and Thou shalt dwell in them" (Ps. xvii. 31). God protects and saves all those who confide in Him : "He is the Protector of all that hope in Him." "Thou who savest them that trust in Thee" (Ps. xvi. 7). Oh, the great promises that are recorded in the Scriptures to all those who hope in God! He who hopes in God shall not fall into sin : "None of them that trust in Him shall offend" (Ps. xxxiii. 23). Yes, says David, because God has His eyes turned to all those who confide in His goodness, to deliver them by His aid from the death of sin : "Behold the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear Him, and on them that hope in His mercy, to deliver their souls from death" (Ps. xxxii. 18, 19). And in another place God Himself says : "Because he hoped in Me I will

deliver him ; I will protect him ; I will deliver him, and I will glorify him" (Ps. xc. 14, 15). Mark the word 'because.' *Because* he confided in Me, I will protect, I will deliver him from his enemies, and from the danger of falling; and finally I will give him eternal glory. Isaias says of those who place their hope in God: "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as the eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (Is. xl. 31). They shall cease to be weak as they are now, and shall gain in God a great strength; they shall not faint, they shall not even feel weary in walking the way of salvation, but they shall run and fly as eagles: "In silence and in hope shall your strength be" (Is. xxx. 15). All our strength, the prophet tells us, consists in placing all our confidence in God, and in being silent; that is, in reposing in the arms of His mercy, without trusting to our own efforts or to human means.

And when did it ever happen that a man had confidence in God and was lost? "No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded" (Eccles. ii. 11). It was this confidence that assured David that he should not perish: "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted; I shall not be confounded for ever" (Ps. xxx. 1). Perhaps then, says St. Augustine, God could be a deceiver, who offers to support us in dangers if we lean upon Him, and would then withdraw Himself if we had recourse to Him? "God is not a deceiver, that He should offer to support us, and then when we lean upon Him should slip away from us."⁸⁴ David calls the man happy who trusts in God: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee" (Ps. lxxxiii. 13). And why? because, says he, he who trusts in God will always find himself surrounded by God's mercy: "Mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord" (Ps. xxxi. 10). So that he shall be surrounded and guarded by God on every side in such a way that he shall be prevented from losing his soul.

It is for this cause that the Apostle recommends us so earnestly to preserve our confidence in God; for (he tells us) it will certainly obtain from Him a great remuneration: "Do not, therefore, lose your confidence, which hath a great reward" (Heb. x. 35). As is our confidence, so

shall be the graces we receive from God : if our confidence is great, great too will be the graces : ‘Great faith merits great things.’ St. Bernard writes, that the Divine mercy is an inexhaustible fountain, and that he who brings to it the largest vessel of confidence shall take from it the largest measure of gifts : ‘Neither, O Lord, dost Thou put the oil of Thy mercy into any other vessel than that of confidence.’⁸⁵ The Prophet had long before expressed the same thought : “Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us,” (*i. e.* in proportion) “as we have hoped in Thee” (Ps. xxxii. 22). This was well exemplified in the Centurion, to whom our Saviour said, in praise of his confidence : “Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee” (St. Matt. viii. 13). And our Lord revealed to St. Gertrude, that he who prays with confidence, does Him in a manner such violence, that He cannot but hear him in every thing he asks : ‘Prayer,’ said St. John Climacus, ‘does a pious violence to God.’ It does Him a violence, but a violence which He likes, and which pleases Him.

“Let us go, therefore,” according to the admonition of St. Paul, “with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid” (Heb. iv. 16). The throne of grace is Jesus Christ, who is now sitting on the right hand of the Father ; not on the throne of justice, but of grace, to obtain pardon for us if we fall into sin, and help to enable us to persevere if we are enjoying His friendship. To this throne we must always have recourse with confidence ; that is to say, with that trust which springs from faith in the goodness and truth of God, who has promised to hear him who prays to Him with confidence, but with a confidence that is both sure and stable. On the other hand, says St. James, let not the man who prays with hesitation think to receive any thing : “For he who wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think to receive any thing of the Lord” (St. James i. 6, 7). He will receive nothing, because the diffidence which agitates him is unjust towards God, and will hinder His mercy from listening to his prayers : ‘Thou hast not asked rightly, because thou hast asked doubtingly,’ says St. Basil ; ‘thou

hast not received grace, because thou hast asked it without confidence.⁸⁶ David said that our confidence in God ought to be firm as a mountain, which is not moved by each gust of wind: "They who trust in the Lord are as Mount Sion; he shall not be moved for ever" (Ps. exxiv. 1). And it is this which our Lord recommends to us, if we wish to obtain the graces which we ask: "Whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you" (St. Mark xi. 24). Whatever grace you require, be sure of having it, and so you shall obtain it.

But on what, a man will say, am I, a miserable sinner, to found this certain confidence of obtaining what I ask? On what? On the promise made by Jesus Christ, "Ask, and you shall receive" (St. John xvi. 24). 'Who will fear to be deceived, when the truth promises?' says St. Augustine.⁸⁷ How can we doubt our being heard, when God, who is truth itself, promises to give us that which we ask of Him in prayer? 'We should not be exhorted to ask,' says the same father, 'unless He meant to give.' Certainly God would not have exhorted us to ask Him for favours, if He had not determined to grant them; but this is the very thing to which He exhorts us so strongly, and which is repeated so often in the Scriptures—pray, ask, seek, and you shall obtain what you desire: "Whatever you will, seek and it shall be done to you." And in order that we may pray to Him with due confidence, our Saviour has taught us, in the 'Our Father,' that when we have recourse to Him for the graces necessary to salvation (all of which are included in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer) we should call Him not Lord but Father—'Our Father'—because it is His will that we should ask God for grace with the same confidence with which a son, when in want or sick, asks food or medicine from his own father. If a son is dying of hunger, he has only to make his case known to his father, and his father will forthwith provide him with food; and if he has received a bite from a venomous serpent, he has only to show his father the wound, and the father will immediately apply whatever remedy he has.

Trusting, therefore, in God's promises, let us always pray with confidence; not vacillating, but stable and firm,

as the Apostle says : " Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering ; for He is faithful that hath promised " (Heb. x. 23). As it is perfectly certain that God is faithful in His promises, so ought our faith also to be perfectly certain that He will hear us when we pray. And although sometimes, when we are in a state of aridity, or disturbed by some fault we have committed, we perhaps do not feel while praying that sensible confidence which we would wish to experience, yet for all this, let us force ourselves to pray, and to pray without ceasing ; for God will not neglect to hear us. Nay, rather He will hear us more readily ; because we shall then pray with more distrust of ourselves ; and confiding only in the goodness and faithfulness of God, who has promised to hear the man who prays to Him. Oh, how God is pleased in the time of our tribulations, of our fears, and of our temptations, to see us hope against hope ; that is, in spite of the feeling of diffidence which we then experience, because of our desolation ! This is that for which the Apostle praises the patriarch Abraham, " who against hope, believed in hope " (Rom. iv. 18).

St. John says, that he who reposes a sure trust in God certainly becomes a saint : " And every one that hath this hope in Him, sanctifieth himself, as He also is holy " (1 St. John iii. 3). For God gives abundant graces to them that trust in Him. By this confidence the host of martyrs, of virgins, even of children, in spite of the dread of the torments which their persecutors prepared for them, overcame both their tortures and their persecutors. Sometimes, I say, we pray ; but it seems to us that God will not hear us : alas ! let us not then neglect to persevere in prayer and in hope ; let us then say with Job, " Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him " (Job xiii. 15.) O my God, though Thou hast driven me from Thy presence, I will not cease to pray, and to hope in Thy mercy. Let us do so, and we shall get what we want from God. So did the Canaanitish woman, and obtained all she wished from Jesus Christ. This woman had a daughter possessed by a devil, and prayed our Saviour to deliver her : " Have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously tormented by a devil "

(St. Matt. xv. 22). Our Lord answered her, that He was not sent for the Gentiles, of whom she was one, but for the Jews. She, however, did not lose heart, but renewed her prayer with confidence: Lord, Thou canst console me! Thou must console me; 'Lord, help me!' Jesus replied, But the bread of the children, it is not good to give it to the dogs: "It is not good to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs." But, my Lord, she answered, even the dogs are allowed to have the fragments of bread which fall from the table: "Yea, Lord; for the whelps eat of the crumbs that fall from the tables of their masters." Then our Saviour, seeing the great confidence of this woman, praised her, and did what she asked, saying, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt." For who, says Ecclesiasticus, has ever called on God for aid, and has been neglected and left unaided by Him? "Or who hath called upon Him, and He hath despised him?" (Ecclus. ii. 12.)

St. Augustine says, that prayer is a key which opens heaven to us; the same moment that our prayer ascends to God, the grace which we ask for descends to us: 'The prayer of the just is the key of heaven; the petition ascends, and the mercy of God descends.'⁸⁸ The royal prophet writes, that our supplications and God's mercy are united together: "Blessed is God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me" (Ps. lxxv. 20). And hence the same St. Augustine says, that when we are praying to God, we ought to be certain that God is hearing us: 'When you see that your prayer is not removed from you, be sure that His mercy is not removed from you.'⁸⁹ And for myself, I speak the truth, I never feel greater consolation, nor a greater confidence of my salvation, than when I am praying to God, and recommending myself to Him. And I think that the same thing happens to all other believers; for the other signs of our salvation are uncertain and unstable: but that God hears the man who prays to Him with confidence is an infallible truth, as it is infallible that God cannot fail in His promises.

When we find ourselves weak, and unable to overcome any passion, or any great difficulty, so as to fulfil that

which God requires of us, let us take courage and say with the Apostle, 'I can do all things in Him, who strengtheneth me.' Let us not say, as some do, I cannot; I distrust myself. With our own strength certainly we can do nothing; but with God's help we can do every thing. If God said to any one, Take this mountain on your back, and carry it, for I am helping you; would not the man be a mistrustful fool, if he answered, I will not take it; for I have not strength to carry it? And thus, when we know how miserable and weak we are, and when we find ourselves most encompassed with temptations, let us not lose heart; but let us lift up our eyes to God, and say with David, "The Lord is my helper; and I will despise my enemies" (Ps. cxvii. 6). With the help of my Lord, I shall overcome and laugh to scorn all the assaults of my foes. And when we find ourselves in danger of offending God, or in any other critical position, and are too confused to know what is best to be done, let us recommend ourselves to God, saying, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Ps. xxvi. 1.) And let us be sure that God will then certainly give us light, and will save us from every evil.

But I am a sinner, you will say; and in the Scripture I read, "God heareth not sinners" (St. John ix. 31). St. Thomas answers (with St. Augustine), that this was said by the blind man, who, when he spoke, had not as yet been enlightened: 'That is the word of a blind man not yet perfectly enlightened, and therefore it is not authoritative.'⁹⁰ Though, adds St. Thomas, it is true of the petition which the sinner makes, 'so far forth as he is a sinner;' that is, when he asks from a desire of continuing to sin; as, for instance, if he were to ask assistance to enable him to take revenge on his enemy, or to execute any other bad intention. The same holds good for the sinner who prays God to save him, but has no desire to quit the state of sin. There are some unhappy persons who love the chains with which the devil keeps them bound like slaves. The prayers of such men are not heard by God; because they are rash, presumptuous, and abominable. For what greater presumption can there be than for a man to ask favours of a

prince, whom he not only has often offended, but whom he intends to offend still more? And this is the meaning of the Holy Spirit, when He says, that the prayer of him who turns away his ears so as not to hear what God commands, is detestable and odious to God : "He who turneth away his ears from learning the law, his prayer shall be an abomination" (Prov. xxviii. 9). To these people God says, It is of no use your praying to Me, for I will turn My eyes from you, and will not hear you : "When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away My eyes from you ; and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear" (Is. i. 15). Such precisely was the prayer of the impious King Antiochus, who prayed to God, and made great promises, but insincerely, and with a heart obstinate in sin ; the sole object of his prayer being to escape the punishment that impended over him ; therefore God did not hear his prayer, but caused him to die devoured by worms : "Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy" (2 Macc. ix. 13).

But others, who sin through frailty, or by the violence of some great passion, and who groan under the yoke of the enemy, and desire to break these chains of death, and to escape from their miserable slavery, and therefore ask the assistance of God ; the prayer of these, if it is persevering, will certainly be heard by Him, who says that every one that asks receives ; and that he who seeks grace finds it : "For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth" (St. Matt. vii. 8). 'Every one, whether he be a just man or a sinner,' says the author of the *Opus Imperfectum*.⁹¹ And in St. Luke, our Lord, when speaking of the man who gave all the loaves he had to his friend, not so much on account of his friendship, as because of the other's importunity, says, "If he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And so I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given to you" (St. Luke xi. 5-9). So that persevering prayer obtains mercy from God, even for those who are not His friends. That which is not obtained through friendship, says St. Chrysostom,

is obtained by prayer : ' That which was not effected by friendship, was effected by prayer.'⁹² He even says that prayer is valued more by God than friendship : ' Friendship is not of such avail with God as prayer ; that which is not effected by friendship, is effected by prayer.'⁹³ And St. Basil doubts not but that even sinners obtain that which they ask, if they persevere in praying : "Sinners obtain what they seek, if they seek perseveringly."⁹⁴ St Gregory said the same : ' The sinner also shall cry, and his prayer shall reach to God.'⁹⁵ So St. Jerome,⁹⁶ who says, that even the sinner can call God his Father, if he prays Him to receive him anew as a son ; after the example of the Prodigal Son, who called him Father, "Father, I have sinned," even though he had not as yet been pardoned. If God did not hear sinners, says St Augustine, in vain would the Publican have asked for forgiveness : ' If God does not hear sinners, in vain would that Publican have said, God be merciful to me a sinner.'⁹⁷ But the Gospel assures us that the Publican did by his prayer obtain forgiveness : " This man went down to his house justified" (St. Luke xviii. 14).

But further still, St. Thomas⁹⁸ examines this point more minutely, and does not hesitate to affirm that even the sinner is heard if he prays ; for though his prayer is not meritorious, yet it has the power of impetration, *i. e.* of obtaining what we ask ; because impetration is not founded on God's justice, but on His goodness. ' Merit,' he says, ' depends on justice ; impetration on grace.'⁹⁹ Thus did Daniel pray, " Incline, O my God, Thine ear, and hear . . . For not in our justifications do we present our prayers before Thy face, but in the multitude of Thy mercies" (Dan. ix. 18). Therefore, when we pray, says St. Thomas, it is not necessary to be friends of God, in order to obtain the grace we ask ; for prayer itself renders us His friends : ' Prayer itself makes us of the family of God.' Moreover, St. Bernard uses a beautiful explanation of this, saying, that the prayer of a sinner to escape from sin arises from the desire to return to the grace of God. Now this desire is a gift, which is certainly given by no other than God Himself ; to what end, therefore, says St. Bernard, would

God give to a sinner this holy desire, unless He meant to hear him? 'For what would He give the desire, unless He willed to hear?' And, indeed, in the Holy Scriptures themselves there are multitudes of instances of sinners who have been delivered from sin by prayer. Thus was King Achab delivered; thus King Manasses; thus King Nabuchodonosor; and thus the good thief (3 Kings ii. 2; Par. xxxiii.; Dan. iv.; St. Luke xxiii. 43). Oh, the wonder! oh, the mighty power of prayer! Two sinners are dying on Calvary by the side of Jesus Christ: one, because he prays, "Remember me," is saved; the other, because he prays not, is damned.

And, in fine, St. Chrysostom says, 'No man has with sorrow asked favours from Him, without obtaining what he wished.'¹⁰⁰ No sinner has ever with penitence prayed to God, without having his desires granted. But why should we cite more authorities, and give more reasons, to demonstrate this point, when our Lord Himself says, "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). The "burdened," according to Saints Augustine, Jerome, and others, are sinners in general, who groan under the load of their sins; and who, if they have recourse to God, will surely, according to His promise, be refreshed and saved by His grace. Ah, we cannot desire to be pardoned so much as He longs to pardon us. 'Thou dost not,' says St. Chrysostom, 'so much desire thy sins to be forgiven, as He desires to forgive thy sins.' There is no grace, he goes on to say, that is not obtained by prayer, though it be the prayer of the most abandoned sinner, provided only it be persevering: 'There is nothing which prayer cannot obtain, though a man be guilty of a thousand sins, provided it be fervent and unremitting.'¹⁰¹ And let us mark well the words of St James: "If any man wanteth wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not" (St. James i. 5). All those, therefore, who pray to God, are infallibly heard by Him, and receive grace in abundance: "He giveth to all abundantly." But you should particularly remark the words which follow, "and upbraideth not." This means that God does not do as men, who, when a person

who has formerly done them an injury comes to ask a favour, immediately upbraid him with his offence. God does not do so to the man who prays, even though he were the greatest sinner in the world, when he asks for some grace conducive to his eternal salvation. Then He does not upbraid him with the offences he has committed; but, as though he had never displeased Him, He instantly receives him, He consoles him, He hears him, and enriches him with an abundance of His gifts. To crown all, our Saviour, in order to encourage us to pray, says, "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My Name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). As though He had said, Courage, O sinners; do not despair: do not let your sins turn you away from having recourse to My Father, and from hoping to be saved by Him, if you desire it. You have not now any merits to obtain the graces which you ask for, for you only deserve to be punished; still do this: go to My Father in My name, through My merits ask the favours which you want, and I promise and swear to you ("Amen, amen, I say to you," which, according to St. Augustine, is a species of oath), that whatever you ask, My Father will grant. O God, what greater comfort can a sinner have after his fall, than to know for certain that all that he asks from God in the name of Jesus Christ, will be given to him!

I say 'all;' but I only mean that which has reference to his eternal salvation; for, with respect to temporal goods, we have already shown that God, even when asked, sometimes does not give them; because He sees that they would injure our soul. But so far as relates to spiritual goods, His promise to hear us is not conditional, but absolute; and therefore St. Augustine tells us, that those things which God promises absolutely, we should demand with absolute certainty of receiving: 'Those things which God promises, seek with certainty.' And how, says the saint, can God ever deny us any thing, when we ask Him for it with confidence? how much more does He desire to dispense to us His graces, than we to receive them! 'He is more willing to be munificent of His benefits to thee, than thou art desirous to receive them.'

St. Chrysostom says, that the only time when God is angry with us is when we neglect to ask Him for His gifts : 'He is only angry when we do not pray.' And how can it ever happen that God will not hear a soul who asks Him for favours all according to His pleasure? When the soul says to Him, Lord, I ask Thee not for goods of this world, —riches, pleasures, honours ; I only ask Thee for Thy grace : deliver me from sin, grant me a good death, give me Paradise, give me Thy holy love (which is that grace which St. Francis of Sales says we should seek more than all others), give me resignation to Thy will ; how is it possible that God should not hear ! What petitions wilt Thou, O my God, ever hear (says St. Augustine), if Thou dost not hear those which are made after Thy own heart? 'What prayers dost Thou hear, if Thou hearest not these?' But, above all, our confidence ought to revive, when we pray God for spiritual graces, as Jesus Christ says, "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him!" (St. Luke xi. 13.) If you, who are so attached to your own interests, so full of self-love, cannot refuse your children that which they ask ; how much more will your heavenly Father, who loves you better than any earthly father, grant you His spiritual goods when you pray for them !

§ 3. THE PERSEVERANCE REQUIRED IN PRAYER.

Our prayers, then, must be humble and confident ; but this is not enough to obtain final perseverance, and thereby eternal life. Individual prayers will obtain the individual graces which they ask of God ; but unless they are persevering, they will not obtain final perseverance ; which, as it is the accumulation of many graces, requires many prayers, not intermitted till death. The grace of salvation is not a single grace, but a chain of graces, all of which are at last linked with the grace of final perseverance. Now to this chain of graces there ought to correspond another chain (as it were) of our prayers ; if we, by neglecting to pray, break the chain of our prayers, the chain of

graces will be broken too; and as it is by this that we have to obtain salvation, we shall not be saved.

It is true that we cannot merit final perseverance, as the Council of Trent teaches: 'It cannot be had from any other source but from Him who is able to confirm the man who is standing, that he may stand with perseverance.'¹⁰² Nevertheless, says St. Augustine, this great gift of perseverance can in a manner be merited by our prayers, that is, can be obtained by praying: 'This gift, therefore, can be suppliantly merited; that is, can be obtained by supplication.'¹⁰³ And F. Suarez adds, that the man who prays infallibly obtains it. But to obtain it, and to save ourselves, says St. Thomas, a persevering and continual prayer is necessary: 'After Baptism continual prayer is necessary to a man in order that he may enter heaven.'¹⁰⁴ And before this, our Saviour Himself had said it over and over again: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint;" "Watch ye therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of man" (St. Luke xviii. 1; xxi. 36). The same had been previously said in the Old Testament: "Let nothing hinder thee from praying always" (Ecclus. xviii. 22); "Bless God at all times, and desire Him to direct thy ways" (Tobias iv. 10). Hence the Apostle inculcated on his disciples never to neglect prayer: "Pray without intermission" (1 Thess. v. 17); "Be instant in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving" (Col. iv. 2); "I will therefore that men pray in every place" (1 Tim. ii. 8). God does indeed wish to give us perseveranc, says St. Nilus, but He will only give it to him who prays for it perseveringly: 'He willeth to confer benefits on him who perseveres in prayer.'¹⁰⁵ Many sinners by the help of God's grace come to be converted, and to receive pardon. But then, because they neglect to ask for perseverance, they fall again, and lose all.

Nor is it enough, says Bellarmine, to ask the grace of perseverance once, or a few times; we ought always to ask it, every day till our death, if we wish to obtain it: 'It must be asked day by day, that it may be obtained day by day.' He who asks it one day, obtains it for that one day;

but if he does not ask it the next day, the next day he will fall!

And this is the lesson which our Lord wished to teach us in the parable of the man who would not give his loaves to his friend who asked him for them until he had become importunate in his demands: "Although he will not rise and give because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" (St. Luke xi. 8). Now if this man, solely to deliver himself from the troublesome importunity of his friend, gave him even against his own will the loaves for which he asked, 'how much more,' says St. Augustine, 'will the good God give, who both commands us to ask, and is angry if we ask not!' How much more will God, who, as He is infinite goodness, has a commensurate desire to communicate to us His good things; how much more will He give his graces when we ask Him for them! And the more, as He Himself tells us to ask for them, and as He is displeased when we do not demand them. God then does indeed wish to give us eternal life, and therein all graces; but he wishes also that we should never omit to ask Him for them, even to the extent of being troublesome. Cornelius à Lapide says on the text just quoted, 'God wishes us to be persevering in prayer to the extent of importunity.' Men of the world cannot bear the importunate; but God not only bears with them, but wishes us to be importunate in praying Him for graces, and especially for perseverance. St. Gregory says, that God wishes us to do Him violence by our prayers; for such violence does not annoy, but pleases Him: 'God wills to be called upon, He wills to be forced, He wills to be conquered by importunity. . . . Happy violence, by which God is not offended but appeased!' ¹⁰⁶

So that to obtain perseverance we must alway recommend ourselves to God, morning and night, at meditation, at Mass, at communion, and always; especially in time of temptation, when we must keep repeating, Lord help me; Lord assist me; keep Thy hand upon me; leave me not; have pity upon me! Is there any thing easier than to say, Lord help me, assist me! The Psalmist says, "With me is prayer to the God of my life" (Ps. xii. 10); on which

the gloss is as follows : ‘ A man may say, I cannot fast, I cannot give alms ; but if he is told to pray, he cannot say this. Because there is nothing easier than to pray. But we must never cease praying ; we must (so to speak) continually do violence to God, that He may assist us always—a violence which is delightful and dear to Him.’ ‘ This violence is grateful to God,’ says Tertullian ; and St. Jerome said, that the more persevering and importunate our prayers are, so much the more are they acceptable to God : ‘ Prayer, as long as it is importunate, is more acceptable.’¹⁰⁷

“ Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates.” Happy is that man, says God, who listens to Me, and watches continually with holy prayers at the gates of My mercy ; and Isaiah says, “ Blessed are all they that wait for Him” (Is. xxx. 18). Blessed are they who till the end wait (in prayer) for their salvation from God. Therefore in the gospel Jesus Christ exhorts us to pray ; but how ? “ Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you” (St. Luke xi. 9). Would it not have been enough to have said, ‘ ask ?’ why add ‘ seek,’ and ‘ knock ?’ No, it was not superfluous to add them ; for thereby our Saviour wished us to understand that we ought to do as the poor who go begging. If they do not receive the alms they ask (I speak of licensed beggars), they do not cease asking ; they return to ask again ; and if the master of the house does not show himself any more, they set to work to knock at the door, till they become very importunate and troublesome. This is what God wishes us to do : to pray, and to pray again, and never to leave off praying, that He would assist us and succour us, that He would enlighten us and strengthen us, and never allow us to forfeit His grace. The learned Lessius says, that the man cannot be excused from mortal sin who does not pray when he is in sin, or in danger of death ; or again, if he neglects to pray for any notable time, as (he says) for one or two months. But this does not include the time of temptations ; because whoever finds himself assailed by any grievous temptation, without doubt sins mortally if he does not

have recourse to God in prayer, to ask for assistance to resist it ; seeing that otherwise he places himself in a proximate, nay, in a certain occasion of sin.

But some one will say, Since God can and wishes to give me the grace of perseverance, why does He not give it me all at once, when I ask Him? The holy fathers assign many reasons. God does not grant it at once, but delays it, first, that he may better prove our confidence. And, further, says St. Augustine, that we may long for it more vehemently. Great gifts, he says, should be greatly desired ; for good things soon got are not held in the same estimation as those which have been long looked for : ‘ God wills not to give quickly, that you may learn to have great desire for great things ; things long desired are pleasanter to obtain, but things soon given are cheapened.’¹⁰⁸ Again, He does so that we may not forget Him ; if we were already secure of persevering and of being saved, and if we had not continual need of God’s help to preserve us in His grace and to save us, we should soon forget God. Want makes the poor keep resorting to the houses of the rich ; so God, to draw us to Himself, as St. Chrysostom says, and to see us often at His feet, in order that He may thus be able to do us greater good, delays giving us the complete grace of salvation till the hour of our death : ‘ It is not because He rejects our prayers that He delays, but by this contrivance He wishes to make us careful, and to draw us to Himself.’¹⁰⁹ Again, He does so in order that we, by persevering in prayer, may unite ourselves closer to Him with the sweet bonds of love : ‘ Prayer,’ says the same St. Chrysostom, ‘ which is accustomed to converse with God, is no slight bond of love to Him.’¹¹⁰ This continual recurrence to God in prayer, and this confident expectation of the graces which we desire from Him, oh, what a great spur and chain is it of love to inflame us, and to bind us more closely to God!

But, till what time have we to pray? Always, says the same saint, till we receive favourable sentence of eternal life ; that is to say, till our death : ‘ Do not leave off till you receive.’¹¹¹ And he goes on to say that the man who resolves, I will never leave off praying till I am saved, will

most certainly be saved: 'If you say, I will **not** give in till I have received, you will assuredly receive.' The Apostle writes that many run for the prize, but that he only receives it who runs till he wins: "Know you not that they who run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain" (1 Cor. ix. 24). It is not then enough for salvation simply to pray; but we must pray always, that we may come to receive the crown which God promises, but promises only to those who are constant in prayer till the end.

So that if we want to be saved, we must do as David, who always kept his eyes turned to God, to implore His aid against being overcome by his enemies: "My eyes are ever towards the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare" (Ps. xxiv. 15). As the devil does not cease continually spreading snares to swallow us up, as St. Peter writes: "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. v. 8); so ought we ever to stand with our arms in our hands to defend ourselves from such a foe, and to say with the royal prophet, "I will pursue after my enemies; and I will not turn again till they are consumed" (Ps. xvii. 38). I will never cease fighting till I see my enemies conquered. But how can we obtain this victory, so important for us, and so difficult? 'By most persevering prayers,' says St. Augustine,—only by prayers, and those most persevering; and till when? As long as the fight shall last. 'As the battle is never over,' says St. Bonaventure, 'so let us never give over asking for mercy.'¹² As we must be always in the combat, so should we be always asking God for aid not to be overcome. Woe, says the Wise Man, to him who in this battle leaves off praying: "Woe to them that have lost patience" (Eccles. ii. 15). We may be saved, the Apostle tells us, but with this condition, "if we retain a firm confidence and the glory of hope until the end" (Heb. iii. 6); if we are constant in praying with confidence until death.

Let us then take courage from the mercy of God, and His promises, and say with the same Apostle, "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?" (Rom.

viii. 35.) Who shall succeed in estranging us from the love of Jesus Christ? Tribulation, perhaps, or the danger of losing the goods of this world? The persecutions of devils or men? The torments inflicted by tyrants? "In all these we overcome (it is St. Paul who encourages us), because of Him that hath loved us." No, he says, no tribulation, no misery, danger, persecution or torture, shall ever be able to separate us from the love of Jesus Christ; because with God's help we shall overcome all, if we fight for love of Him who gave His life for us. F. Hippolitus Durazzo, the day when he resolved to relinquish his dignity of prelate at Rome, and to give himself entirely to God by entering the Society of Jesus (which he afterwards did), was so afraid of being faithless by reason of his weakness, that he said to God, 'Forsake me not, Lord, now that I have given myself wholly to Thee; for pity's sake do not forsake me!' But he heard the whisper of God in his heart, 'Do not thou forsake Me; rather,' said God, 'do I say to thee, forsake Me not.' And so at last the servant of God, trusting in His goodness and help, concluded, 'Then, O my God, Thou wilt not leave me, and I will not leave Thee.'

Finally, if we wish not to be forsaken by God, we ought never to forsake praying Him not to leave us. If we do thus, He will certainly always assist us, and will never allow us to perish, and to be separated from His love. And to this end let us not only take care always to ask for final perseverance, and the graces necessary to obtain it, but let us, at the same time, always by anticipation ask God for grace to go on praying; for this is precisely that great gift which He promised to his elect by the mouth of the prophet: "And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers" (Zach. xii. 10). Oh, what a great grace is the spirit of prayers; that is, the grace which God confers on a soul, to enable it to pray always! Let us, then, never neglect to beg God to give us this grace, and this spirit of continual prayer; because if we pray always, we shall certainly obtain from God perseverance and every other gift which we desire, since His promise of hearing whoever prays to Him cannot fail. "For we are saved

by hope" (Rom. viii. 24). With this hope of always praying, we may reckon ourselves saved. 'Confidence will give us a broad entrance into this city.'¹¹³ This hope, said Venerable Bede, will give us a safe passage into the city of Paradise.

PART II.

THE GRACE OF PRAYER GIVEN TO ALL, AND THE ORDINARY MODE OF
THE OPERATION OF THIS GRACE.

TAKING, then, for granted that prayer is necessary for the attainment of eternal life, as we have proved in Part I. chap. i., we ought, consequently, also to take for granted that every one has sufficient aid from God to enable him actually to pray, without need of any further special grace ; and that by prayer he may obtain all other graces necessary to enable him to persevere in keeping the commandments, and so gain eternal life ; so that no one who is lost can ever excuse himself by saying that it was through want of the aid necessary for his salvation. For as God, in the natural order, has ordained that man should be born naked, and in want of several things necessary for life, but then has given him hands and intelligence to clothe himself and provide for his other needs ; so, in the supernatural order, man is born unable to obtain salvation by his own strength ; but God in his goodness grants to every one the grace of prayer, by which he is able to obtain all other graces which he needs in order to keep the commandments and to be saved.

But before I explain this point, I must prove two preliminary propositions. First, that God wills all men to be saved ; and therefore that Jesus Christ has died for all. Secondly, that God, on His part, gives to all men the graces necessary for salvation ; whereby every one may be saved if he corresponds to them.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST PRELIMINARY PROPOSITION.

God wills all men to be saved, and therefore Christ died to save all men.

GOD loves all things that He has created: "For Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things that Thou hast made" (Wisd. xii. 25). Now love cannot be idle: 'All love has a force of its own, and cannot be idle,' says St. Augustine. Hence love necessarily implies benevolence, so that the person who loves cannot help doing good to the person beloved whenever there is an opportunity: 'Love persuades a man to do those things which he believes to be good for him whom he loves,' says Aristotle. If, then, God loves all men, He must in consequence will that all should obtain eternal salvation, which is the one and sovereign good of man, seeing that it is the one end for which he was created: "You have your fruit unto sanctification; but your end eternal life" (Rom. vi. 22). This doctrine, that God wills all men to be saved, and that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all, is now a certain doctrine taught by the Catholic Church, as theologians in common teach, *e. g.* Petavius, Gonet, Gotti, and others, besides Tourneley, who adds, that it is a doctrine all but of faith. With reason, therefore, were the predestinarians condemned, who, among their other errors, taught (as may be seen in Noris, Petavius, and more especially in Tourneley,¹¹⁴) that God does not will all men to be saved; as Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, testifies of them in his first letter, where he says, 'The ancient predestinarians asserted that God does not will all men to be saved, but only those who are saved.' These persons were condemned, first in the Council of Arles, A.D. 475, which pronounced 'anathema to him who said that Christ did not die for all men, and that He does not will all to be saved.' They were next condemned in the Council of Lyons, A.D. 490, where Lucidus was forced to retract and confess, 'I condemn the man who says that Christ did not suffer death for the salvation of all men.' So also in the ninth century, Gotheschalcus, who renewed the same error, was

condemned by the Council of Querey, A.D. 853, in the third article of which it was decided, 'God wills all men, without exception, to be saved, although all men be not saved;' and in the fourth article: 'There is no man for whom Christ did not suffer, although all men be not redeemed by the mystery of His passion' The same error was finally condemned in the 12th and 13th Propositions of Quesnel. In the former it was said: 'When God wills to save a soul, the will of God is undoubtedly effectual;' in the latter: 'All whom God wills to save through Christ are infallibly saved.' These propositions were justly condemned, precisely because they meant that God does not will all men to be saved; since from the proposition that those whom God wills to be saved are infallibly saved, it logically follows that God does not will even all the faithful to be saved, let alone all men.

This was also clearly expressed by the Council of Trent, where it was said that Jesus Christ died, 'that all might receive the adoption of sons';¹¹⁵ and in chapter iii.: 'But though He died for all, yet all do not receive the benefits of His death.' The Council then takes for granted that the Redeemer died not only for the elect, but also for those who, through their own fault, do not receive the benefit of Redemption. Nor is it of any use to affirm, that the council only meant to say that Jesus Christ has given to the world a ransom sufficient to save all men; for in this sense we might say that He died also for the devils. Moreover, the Council of Trent intended here to reprove the errors of those innovators, who, not denying that the blood of Christ was sufficient to save all, yet asserted that in fact it was not shed and given for all; this is the error which the council intended to condemn, when it said that our Saviour died for all. Further, in chapter vi. it says, that sinners are put in a fit state to receive justification by hope in God through the merits of Jesus Christ: 'They are raised to hope, trusting that God will be merciful to them through Christ.' Now, if Jesus Christ had not applied to all the merits of His passion, then, since no one (without a special revelation) could be certain of being in the number of those to whom the Redeemer had willed to

apply the fruit of His merits, no sinner could entertain such hope, not having the certain and secure foundation which is necessary for hope, namely, that God wills all men to be saved, and will pardon all sinners prepared for it by the merits of Jesus Christ. And this, besides being the error formerly condemned in Baius, who said that Christ had only died for the elect, is also condemned in the fifth proposition of Jansenius : 'It is semi-Pelagianism to say that Christ died or shed His blood for all men.' And Innocent X., in his constitution of A.D. 1653, expressly declared, that to say Christ died for the salvation of the elect only is an impious and heretical proposition.

On the other hand, both the Scriptures and all the Fathers assure us that God sincerely and really wishes the salvation of all men and the conversion of all sinners, as long as they are in this world. For this we have first of all the express text of St. Paul, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). The sentence of the Apostle is absolute and indicative—"God wills all men to be saved." These words in their natural sense declare that God truly wills all men to be saved ; and it is a certain rule, received in common by all, that the words of Scripture are not to be distorted to an unnatural sense, except in the sole case when the literal meaning is repugnant to faith or morals. St. Bonaventure writes precisely to our purpose when he says, 'We must hold, that when the Apostle says, God wills all men to be saved, it is necessary to grant that He does will it.' It is true that St. Augustine and St. Thomas mention different interpretations which have been given to this text ; but both these doctors understand it to mean a real will of God to save all without exception. And concerning St. Augustine, we shall see just now that this was his true opinion ; so that St. Prosper protests against attributing to him the supposition that God did not sincerely wish the salvation of all men, and of each individual, as an aspersion on the holy doctor. Hence the same St. Prosper, who was a most faithful disciple of his, says, 'It is most sincerely to be believed and confessed that God wills all men to be saved ; since the Apostle (whose very words these

are) is particular in commanding that prayers should be made to God for all.¹¹⁶

The argument of the saint is clear, founded on St. Paul's words in the above-cited passage — "I beseech, therefore, first of all, that prayers should be made for all men;" and then he adds, "For this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who wills all men to be saved." So the Apostle wishes us to pray for all, exactly in the same sense as God wishes the salvation of all. St. Chrysostom made use of the same argument: 'If He wills all to be saved, surely we ought to pray for all. If He desires all to be saved, do you also be of one mind with Him.'¹¹⁷ And if in some passages in his controversy with the semi-Pelagians, St. Augustine seems to have held a different interpretation of this text, saying that God does not will the salvation of each individual, but only of some, Petavius well observes, that here the holy father speaks only incidentally, not with direct intention; or at any rate, that he speaks of the grace of that absolute and victorious will (*voluntas absoluta et victrix*) with which God absolutely wills the salvation of some persons, and of which the saint elsewhere says, 'The will of the Almighty is always invincible.'¹¹⁸

Let us hear how St. Thomas¹¹⁹ uses another method of reconciling the opinion of St. Augustine with that of St. John Damascene, who holds that antecedently God wills all and each individual to be saved: 'God's first intention is to will all men to be saved, that as good He may make us partakers of His goodness; but after we have sinned, He wills to punish us as just.'¹²⁰ On the other hand, St. Augustine (as we have seen), seems in a few passages to think differently. But St. Thomas reconciles these opinions, and says, that St. Damascene spoke of the antecedent will of God, by which He really wills all men to be saved, while St. Augustine spoke of the consequent will. He then goes on to explain the meaning of antecedent and consequent will: 'Antecedent will is that by which God wills all to be saved; but when all the circumstances of this or that individual are considered, it is not found to be good that all men should be saved; for it is good that he

who prepares himself, and consents to it, should be saved ; but not he who is unwilling and resists, &c. And this is called the consequent will, because it presupposes a foreknowledge of a man's deeds, not as a cause of the act of will, but as a reason for the thing willed and determined.'

So that St. Thomas was also of opinion that God truly wills all men and each individual to be saved. This opinion he re-asserts in several other places. On the text—"Him that cometh to Me I will not cast out," he quotes St. Chrysostom, who makes our Lord say, 'If then I was incarnate for the salvation of men, how can I cast them out? And this is what He means when He says, Therefore I cast them not out, because I came down from heaven to do My Father's will, who wills all men to be saved.'¹²¹ And again, 'God, by His most liberal will, gives (grace) to every one that prepares himself—"who wills all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4); and therefore the grace of God is wanting to no man, but as far as He is concerned He communicates it to every one'¹²² Again, he declares the same thing more expressly in his explanation of the text of St. Paul—"God wills all men to be saved." 'In God,' he says, 'the salvation of all men, considered *in* itself, belongs to that class of things which He wishes, and this is His antecedent will ; but when the good of justice is taken into consideration, and the rightness of punishing sin, in this sense He does not will the salvation of all, and this is His consequent will.'¹²³ Here we may see how consistent St. Thomas was in his explanation of antecedent and consequent will ; for he here repeats what he had said in the passage quoted a little before. In this place he only adds the comparison of a merchant, who antecedently wills to save all his merchandise ; but if a tempest comes on, he willingly throws it overboard, in order to preserve his own life. In like manner, he says, God, considering the iniquity of some persons, wills them to be punished in satisfaction of His justice, and consequently does not will them to be saved ; but antecedently, and considered in itself, He wills with a true desire the salvation of all men. So that, as he says in the former passage, God's will to save all men is on His part abso-

lute ; it is only conditional on the part of the object willed, that is, if man will correspond to what the right order demands, in order to be saved. 'Nor yet,' he says, 'is there imperfection on the part of God's will, but on the part of the thing willed ; because it is not accepted with all the circumstances which are required, in order to be saved in the proper manner.' And he again and more distinctly declares what he means by antecedent and consequent will : 'A judge antecedently wishes every man to live, but he consequently wishes a murderer to be hanged ; so God antecedently wills every man to be saved, but He consequently wills some to be damned ; in consequence, that is, of the exigences of His justice.'

I have no intention here of blaming the opinion that men are predestined to glory previously to the prevision of their merits ; I only say that I cannot understand how those who think that God, without any regard to their merits, has elected some to eternal life, and excluded others, can therefore persuade themselves that He wills all to be saved ; unless, indeed, they mean that this will of God is not true and sincere, but rather a hypothetical or metaphorical will. I cannot understand, I say, how it can be maintained that God wills all men to be saved, and to partake of His glory, when the greater part of them have been already excluded from this glory antecedently to any demerit on their part. Petavius says, in defence of his contrary opinion, What was the use of God's giving to all men the desire of eternal happiness, when he had excluded the majority of them from it antecedently to any demerits of theirs ? What was the use of Jesus Christ's coming to save all men by His death, when so many poor creatures had been already deprived by God of all benefit therefrom ? What was the use of giving them so many means of salvation, when they had been already excluded from the attainment of the end ? Therefore, adds Petavius (and this is a most weighty reflection), if this ever was the case, we must say that God, who loves all things that He has created, yet in creating mankind did not love them all, but rather utterly detested the greater part of them, in excluding them from the glory for which He had

created them. It is certain that the happiness of a creature consists in the attainment of the end for which it was created. On the other hand, it is certain that God creates all men for eternal life. If, therefore, God, having created some men for eternal life, had thereupon, without regard to their sins, excluded them from it, He would in creating them have utterly hated them *gratis*, and would have done them the greatest injury they could possibly suffer in excluding them from the attainment of their end, that is, of the glory for which they had been created — ‘For,’ says Petavius in a passage which we abridge, ‘God cannot feel indifferent between love and hatred towards His creatures, especially towards men, whom He either loves to eternal life, or hates to damnation ; but it is the greatest evil of man to be alienated from God and to be reprobate ; wherefore, if God wills the everlasting destruction of any man’s soul, He does not love him, but hates him with the greatest hatred possible, in that kind which transcends the natural order.’ And by this eternal ruin or ‘everlasting destruction,’ he does not mean the positive damnation which God destines for certain individuals, but simply the exclusion from glory ; since in fact, as Tertullian says, of what use would it ever be to us that God had not created us for hell, if in creating us He had separated us from the number of His elect ? Since the separation from the elect necessarily implies the loss of salvation, and therefore damnation ; since there is no mean between them. ‘For what,’ says Tertullian, ‘will be the end of the separated ? Will it not be the loss of salvation ?’ Whence Petavius concludes — ‘Wherefore, if God loves every man with a love which is antecedent to their merits, He does not hate his soul, and therefore He does not desire the greatest evil to him.’ If, therefore, God loves all men, as is certain, we ought to hold that He wills all to be saved, and that He has never hated any one to such a degree, that He has willed to do him the greatest evils, by excluding him from glory previously to the prevision of his demerits.

I say notwithstanding, and repeat again and again, that I cannot understand it ; for this matter of predestination is so profound a mystery that it made the Apostle

exclaim : " Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord " (Rom. xi. 33, 34). We ought to submit ourselves to the will of God, who has chosen to leave this mystery in obscurity to His Church, that we all might humble ourselves under the deep judgments of His Divine providence. And the more, because Divine grace, by which alone men can gain eternal life, is dispensed more or less abundantly by God entirely *gratis*, and without any regard to our merits. So that to save ourselves it will always be necessary for us to throw ourselves into the arms of the Divine Mercy, in order that He may assist us with His grace to obtain salvation, trusting always in His infallible promises to hear and save the man who prays to Him.

But let us return to our point, that God sincerely wills all men to be saved. There are other texts which prove the same thing, as when God says by Ezechiel : " As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked man turn from his way and live " (Ezech. xxxiii. 11). He not only says that He wills not the death, but that He wills the life of a sinner ; and he swears, as Tertullian observes, in order that he may be more readily believed in this : ' When moreover He swears, saying, as I live, He desires to be believed.'¹²⁴

Further, David says : " For wrath is in His indignation, and life in His will " (Ps. xxix. 6). If He chastises us, He does it because our sins provoke Him to indignation ; but as to His will, He wills not our death, but our life : " Life in His will. " St. Basil says on this text, that God wills all to be made partakers of life. David says elsewhere : " Our God is the God of salvation ; and of the Lord of the Lord are the issues from death " (Ps. lxvii. 21). On this Bellarmine says : ' This is proper to Him, this is His nature, our God is a saving God, and His are the issues from death—that is, liberation from it. ' So that it is God's proper nature to save all, and to deliver all from eternal death.

Again, our Lord says : " Come to Me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you " (St. Matt. xi. 28).

If He calls all to salvation, then He truly wills all to be saved. Again, St. Peter says: "He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (2 St. Peter iii. 9). He does not will the damnation of any one, but He wills that all should do penance, and so should be saved.

Again, our Lord says: "I stand at the gate and knock; if any one will open, I will enter" (Apoc. iii. 20). "Why will you die, O house of Israel? return and live" (Ezech. xxxiii. 11). "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?" (Is. v. 4). "How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not!" (St. Matt. xxiii. 37). How could our Lord have said that He stands knocking at the heart of us sinners? How exhort us so strongly to return to His arms? How reproach us by asking what more He could have done for our salvation? How say that He has willed to receive us as children, if He had not a true will to save all men? Again, St. Luke relates that our Lord, looking over Jerusalem from a distance, and contemplating the destruction of its people because of their sin: "Seeing the city, He wept over it" (St. Luke xix. 41). Why did He weep then, says Theophylact (after St. Chrysostom), seeing the ruin of the Jews, unless it was because He really desired their salvation? Now then, after so many attestations of our Lord, in which He makes known to us that He wills to see all men saved, how can it ever be said that God does not will the salvation of all? 'But if these texts of Scripture,' says Petavius, 'in which God has testified His will in such clear and often-repeated expressions, nay even with tears and with an oath, may be abused and distorted to the very opposite sense,—namely, that God determined to send all mankind (except a few) to perdition, and never had a will to save them, what dogma of faith is so clear as to be safe from similar injury and cavil?'¹²⁵ This great writer says, that to deny that God really wills the salvation of all men is an insult and cavil against the plainest doctrines of the faith. And Cardinal Sfondrati adds: 'Those who think otherwise, seem to me to make God a mere stage-god; like

those people who pretend to be kings in a play, when indeed they are any thing but kings.^{'126}

Moreover, this truth, that God wills all men to be saved, is confirmed by the general consent of the Fathers. There can be no doubt that all the Greek Fathers have been uniform in saying that God wills all and each individual to be saved. So St. Justin, St. Basil, St. Gregory, St. Cyril, St. Methodius, and St. Chrysostom, all adduced by Petavius. But let us see what the Latin Fathers say. St. Jerome: (God) 'wills to save all; but since no man is saved without his own will, He wills us to will what is good, that when we have willed, He may also will to fulfil His designs in us;'^{'127} and in another place, 'God therefore willed to save those who desire (to be saved); and He invited them to salvation, that their will might have its reward; but they would not believe in Him.'^{'128} St. Hilary: 'God would that all men were saved, and not those alone who are to belong to the number of the elect, but all absolutely, so as to make no exception.'^{'129} St. Paulinus: 'Christ says to all, "Come to Me," &c.; for He, the Creator of all men, so far as He is concerned, wills every man to be saved.'^{'130} St. Ambrose: 'Even with respect to the wicked He had to manifest His will (to save them), and therefore He could not pass over His betrayer, that all might see that in the election even of the traitor He exhibits (His desire) of saving all . . . and, so far as God is concerned, He shows to all that He was willing to deliver all.'^{'131} The author of the work known as the *Commentaries of St. Ambrose* (supposed by Petavius to be Hilary the Deacon) in speaking of the text of St. Paul ("Who wills all men," &c.), asks this question: 'But since God wills that all should be saved, as He is Almighty, why are there so many who are not saved?' And he answers: 'He wills them to be saved, if they also are willing; for He who gave the law excluded no one from salvation . . . this medicine is of no use to the unwilling.' He says that God has excluded no one from glory, and that He gives grace to all to be saved, but on this condition, that they are willing to correspond to it; because His grace is of no use to the man who rejects it. St. Chrysostom, in like manner, asks, 'Why then are not all men saved, if God

wills all to be saved?' and he answers, 'Because every man's will does not coincide with His will, and He forces no man.'¹³² St. Augustine: 'God wills all men to be saved, but not so as to destroy their free will.'¹³³ He says the same thing in several other places, which we shall shortly have to produce.

That Jesus Christ, therefore, died for all and each of mankind, is clear, not only from the Scriptures, but from the writings of the Fathers. Great certainly was the ruin which the sin of Adam occasioned to the whole human race; but Jesus Christ, by the grace of Redemption, repaired all the evils which Adam introduced. Hence the Council of Trent has declared that baptism renders the soul pure and immaculate; and that the sin which remains in it is not for its harm, but to enable it to gain a higher crown, if it resists so as not to consent to it: 'For in the regenerate God hates nothing . . . they are made innocent, immaeulate, pure, and beloved of God . . . But this holy synod confesses and feels that concupiscence or the fuel (of sin) remains in baptised persons; but as it was left for our probation, it cannot injure those who do not consent to it; nay rather, he who contends lawfully (against it) shall be crowned.'¹³⁴ Thus, as St. Leo says, 'we have gained greater things by the grace of Christ than we had lost through the envy of the devil.'¹³⁵ The gain which we have made by the redemption of Jesus Christ is greater than the loss which we suffered by the sin of Adam. The Apostle plainly declared this when he said, "Not as the offence, so also the gift. For where the offence abounded, there did grace more abound" (Rom. v. 15, 20). Our Lord said the same: "I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (St. John x. 10). David and Isaias had predicted it: "With Him is plentiful redemption," "She hath received of the hand of the Lord double for all her sins" (Ps. cxxix. 7; Is. xl. 2). On which words the interpreter says: 'God has so forgiven iniquities through Christ, that men have received double—that is, very much greater good, instead of the punishment of sin which they deserved.'¹³⁶

Now that our Saviour, as I said, died for all, and **that**

He offered the work of His redemption to the Eternal Father for the salvation of each one, the holy Scriptures assure us: "The Son of Man came to save that which was lost" (St. Matt. xviii. 11). "Who gave Himself a redemption for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). "Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but to Him who died for them" (2 Cor. v. 15). "For hereunto we labour and are reviled, because we hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful" (1 Tim. iv. 10). "And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 St. John ii. 2). "For the charity of Christ presseth us, judging this, that if one died for all, then all were dead" (2 Cor. v. 14). And to speak only of this last text, I ask, how could the Apostle ever have concluded that all were dead, because Christ died for all, unless he had been certain that Christ had really died for all? And the more, because St. Paul uses this truth as an argument for the love which it should kindle in us towards our Saviour. But by far the best passage to exhibit the desire and wish which God has to save all men, is another text of St. Paul: "He that spared not His own son, but delivered Him for us all." The force of this passage is increased by what follows: "How hath He not also with Him given us all things" (Rom. viii. 32). If God has given us all things, how can we henceforth fear that He has denied us the election to glory, always on the condition of our corresponding (to His grace)? And if He has given us His Son, says Cardinal Sfondrati, how will He deny us the grace to be saved? 'Here he clearly instructs us' (he is speaking of St. Paul) 'that God assures us that He will not refuse us the less after He has given the greater; that He will not deny us grace to save ourselves, after giving His Son that we might be saved.'¹³⁷ And in truth, how could St. Paul have said that God, in giving us His Son, has given us all things, if the Apostle had believed that God had excluded many from the glory which is the one good and the one end for which they were created? Has then God given 'all things' to these 'many,' and yet denied them the best thing—namely, eternal happiness, without which (as there is no middle way) they cannot but be eternally

miserable? Unless we would say another thing still more unseemly, as another learned author well observes—namely, that God gives to all the grace to attain glory, but then refuses to allow many to enter on its enjoyment; that He gives the means, and refuses the end.

For the rest, all the holy fathers agree in saying that Jesus Christ died to obtain eternal salvation for all men. St. Jerome: 'Christ died for all; He was the only one who could be offered for all, because all were dead in sins.'¹³⁸ St. Ambrose: 'Christ came to cure our wounds; but since all do not search for the remedy . . . therefore He cures those who are willing; He does not force the unwilling.'¹³⁹ In another place: 'He has provided for all men the means of cure, that whoever perishes may lay the blame of his death on himself, because he would not be cured when he had a remedy; and that, on the other hand, the mercy of Christ to all may be openly proclaimed, who wills that all men should be saved.'¹⁴⁰ And more clearly still in another place: 'Jesus did not write His will for the benefit of one, or of few, but of all; we are all inscribed therein as His heirs; the legacy is in common, and belongs by right to all; the universal heritage, belonging wholly to each.'¹⁴¹ Mark the words, 'we are all inscribed as heirs; the Redeemer has written us all down as heirs of heaven.' St. Leo: 'As Christ found no one free from guilt, so He came to deliver all.'¹⁴² St. Augustine, on the words of St. John iii. 17, "For God did not send His Son to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him," says: 'So, as far as it lies with the physician, He came to heal the sick man.'¹⁴³ Mark the words, 'as far as it lies with the physician.' For God, as far as He is concerned, effectually wills the salvation of all, but (as St. Augustine goes on to say) cannot heal the man who will not be healed: 'He heals universally, but He heals not the unwilling. For what can be happier for thee, than, as thou hast thy life in thy hands, so to have thy health depend on thy will?' When he says 'He heals,' He speaks of sinners who are sick, and unable to get well by their own strength; when he says 'universally' (*omnino*), he declares that nothing is wanting on God's part for sinners to be healed and saved. Then when he says, 'as thou

hast thy life in thy hands, so thy health depends on thy will,' he shows that God for His part really wills us all to be saved; otherwise, it would not be in our power to obtain health and eternal life. In another place, 'He who redeemed us at such a cost, wills not that we perish; for He does not purchase in order to destroy, but He redeems in order to give life.'¹⁴⁴ He has redeemed us all, in order to save us all. And hence he encourages all to hope for eternal bliss in that celebrated sentence: 'Let human frailty raise itself; let it not say, I shall never be happy. . . . It is a greater thing that Christ has done, than that which He has promised. What has He done? He has died for thee. What has He promised? That thou shalt live with Him.' Some have pretended to say that Jesus Christ offered His blood for all, in order to obtain grace for them, but not salvation. But Petrocorensis will not hear of this opinion, of which he says: 'O disputatious frivolity! How could the wisdom of God will the means of salvation, without willing its end?'¹⁴⁵ St. Augustine, moreover, speaking against the Jews, says: 'Ye acknowledge the side which ye pierced, that it was opened both by you and for you.'¹⁴⁶ If Jesus Christ had not really given His blood for all, the Jews might have answered St. Augustine, that it was quite true they had opened the side of our Saviour, but not that it was opened for them.

In like manner, St. Thomas has no doubt that Jesus Christ died for all; whence he deduces that He wills all to be saved: 'Christ Jesus is mediator between God and men; not between God and some men, but between Him and all men; and this would not be, unless He willed all to be saved.'¹⁴⁷ This is confirmed, as we have already said, by the condemnation of the fifth proposition of Jansenius, who said, 'It is semi-Pelagianism to assert that Christ died or shed His blood for all men.' The sense of this, according to the context of the other condemned propositions, and according to the principles of Jansenius, is as follows: Jesus Christ did not die to merit for all men the graces sufficient for salvation, but only for the predestined; or, in Jansenius' own expressed words, 'It is in no way consonant to the principles of Augustine, to think that Christ our Lord

died or shed His blood for the eternal salvation either of unbelievers, who die in their unbelief, or of the just, who do not persevere.¹⁴⁸ Therefore the contrary and Catholic belief is as follows: It is not semi-Pelagianism, but it is right to say that Jesus Christ died to merit not only for the predestinate, but for all, even for the reprobate, grace sufficient to obtain eternal salvation in the ordinary course of Providence.

Further, that God truly, on His part, wills all men to be saved, and that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all, is certified to us by the fact that God imposes on us all the precept of hope. The reason is clear. St. Paul calls Christian hope the anchor of the soul, secure and firm: "Who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm" (Heb. vi. 18, 19). Now in what could we fix this sure and firm anchor of our hope, except in the truth that God wills all to be saved? 'With what confidence,' says Petrocorensis, 'will men be able to hope for God's mercy, if it is not certain that God wills the salvation of all of them? With what confidence will they offer the death of Christ to God, in order to obtain pardon, if it is uncertain whether He was offered up for them?' And Cardinal Sfondrati says, that if God had elected some to eternal life, and excluded others, we should have a greater motive to despair than to hope; seeing that, in fact, the elect are much fewer than the damned: 'No one could have a firm hope, since he would have more grounds of despair than of hope; for the reprobate are much more numerous than the elect.' And if Jesus Christ had not died for the salvation of all, how could we have a sure ground to hope for salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ, without a special revelation? But St. Augustine had no doubt when he said, 'All my hope, and the certainty of my faith, is in the precious Blood of Christ, which was shed for us and for our salvation.' Thus the saint placed all his hope in the Blood of Jesus Christ; because the faith assured him that Christ died for all. But we shall have a better opportunity of examining this question of hope in chapter iii., where we

shall establish the principal point—namely, that the grace of prayer is given to all.

Here it only remains for us to answer the objection which is drawn from children being lost when they die before baptism; and before they come to the use of reason. If God wills all to be saved, it is objected, how is it that these children perish without any fault of their own, since God gives them no assistance to attain eternal salvation? There are two answers to this objection, the latter more correct than the former. I will state them briefly. First, it is answered that God, by antecedent will, wishes all to be saved, and therefore has granted universal means for the salvation of all; but these means at times fail of their effect, either by reason of the unwillingness of some persons to avail themselves of them, or because others are unable to make use of them, on account of secondary causes (such as the death of children), whose course God is not bound to change, after having disposed the whole according to the just judgment of His general providence; all this is collected from what St. Thomas says.¹⁴⁹ Jesus Christ offered His merits for all men, and instituted baptism for all; but the application of this means of salvation, so far as relates to children who die before the use of reason, is not prevented by the direct will of God, but by a merely permissive will; because as He is the general providence of all things, He is not bound to disturb the general order, to provide for the particular order.

The second answer is, that to perish is not the same as not to be blessed: since eternal happiness is a gift entirely gratuitous; and therefore the want of it is not a punishment. The opinion, therefore, of St. Thomas is very just, that children who die in infancy have neither the pain of sense nor the pain of loss; not the pain of sense, he says, 'because pain of sense corresponds to conversion to creatures; and in original sin there is not conversion to creatures' (as the fault is not our own), 'and therefore pain of sense is not due to original sin;' because original sin does not imply an act.¹⁵⁰ Objectors oppose to this the teaching of St. Augustine, who in some places shows that his opinion

was, that children are condemned even to the pain of sense. But in another place he declares that he was very much confused about this point: these are his words, 'When I come to the punishment of infants, I find myself (believe me) in great straits; nor can I at all find any thing to say.'¹⁵¹ And in another place he writes, that it may be said that such children receive neither reward nor punishment: 'Nor need we fear that it is impossible there should be a middle sentence between reward and punishment; since their life was midway between sin and good works.'¹⁵² This was directly affirmed by St. Gregory Nazianzen: 'Children will be sentenced by the Just Judge neither to the glory of heaven nor to punishment.'¹⁵³ St. Gregory of Nyssa was of the same opinion: 'The premature death of children shows that they who have thus ceased to live will not be in pain and unhappiness.'¹⁵⁴

And as far as relates to the pain of loss, although these children are excluded from glory, nevertheless St. Thomas,¹⁵⁵ who had reflected most deeply on this point, teaches that no one feels pain for the want of that good of which he is not capable; so that as no man grieves that he cannot fly, or no private person that he is not emperor, so these children feel no pain at being deprived of the glory of which they were never capable; since they could never pretend to it either by the principles of nature, or by their own merits. St. Thomas adds, in another place, a further reason of this;¹⁵⁶ which is, that the supernatural knowledge of glory comes only by means of actual faith, which transcends all natural knowledge; so that children can never feel pain for the privation of that glory, of which they never had a supernatural knowledge. He further says, in the former passage, that such children will not only not grieve for the loss of eternal happiness, but will, moreover, have pleasure in their natural gifts; and will even in some way enjoy God, so far as is implied in natural knowledge, and in natural love: 'Rather they will rejoice in this, that they will participate much in the Divine goodness, and in natural perfections.' And he immediately adds, that although they will be separated from God, as regards the union of glory, nevertheless 'they will be united with Him

by participation of natural gifts; and so will even be able to rejoice in Him with a natural knowledge and love.⁵⁷

CHAPTER II.

SECOND PRELIMINARY PROPOSITION.

God commonly gives to all the just the grace necessary for the observance of the commandments, and to all sinners the grace necessary for conversion.

IF then God wills all to be saved, it follows that He gives to all that grace and those aids which are necessary for the attainment of salvation, otherwise it could never be said that He has a true will to save all. ‘The effect of the antecedent will,’ says St. Thomas, ‘by which God wills the salvation of all men, is that order of nature whose purpose is our salvation, and likewise those things which conduce to that end, and which are offered to all in common, whether by nature or by grace.’¹⁵⁸ It is certain, in contradiction to the blasphemies of Luther and Calvin, that God does not impose a law that is impossible to be observed. On the other hand, it is certain, that without the assistance of grace the observance of the law is impossible; as Innocent I. declared against the Pelagians when he said, ‘It is certain, that as we overcome by the aid of God, so without His aid we must be overcome.’¹⁵⁹ Pope Celestine declared the same thing:¹⁶⁰ Therefore, if God gives to all men a possible law, it follows that He also gives to all men the grace necessary to observe it, whether immediately, or mediately, by means of prayer, as the Council of Trent has most clearly defined: ‘God does not command impossibilities; but by commanding He admonishes you both to do what you can, and to ask for that which is beyond your power, and by His help enables you to do it.’ Otherwise, if God refused us both the proximate and remote grace to enable us to fulfil the law, either the law would have been given in vain, or sin would be necessary, and if necessary would be no longer sin, as we shall shortly prove at some length. And this is the general opinion of the Fathers: for instance, St. Cyril

of Alexandria says, 'But if a man endowed as others, and equally with them, with the gifts of Divine grace, has fallen by his own free will, how shall not Christ be said to have saved even him, since he delivered the man so far as relates to the aids granted him in order to avoid sin?'¹⁶¹ How, says the saint, can that sinner, who has received the assistance of grace equally with those who remained faithful, and has of his own accord chosen to sin, how can he blame Jesus Christ, who has, as far as He is concerned, delivered him by means of the assistance granted to him? St. John Chrysostom asks: 'How is it that some are vessels of wrath, others vessels of mercy?' And he answers, 'Because of each person's free will; for, since God is very good, He manifests equal kindness to all.'¹⁶² Then, speaking of Pharaoh, whose heart is said in Scripture to have been hardened, he adds, 'If Pharaoh was not saved, it must all be attributed to his will, since no less was given to him than to those who were saved.' And in another place, speaking of the petition of the mother of Zebedee's sons, on the words, 'It is not mine to give,' &c. he observes: 'By this Christ wished to show that it was not simply His to give, but that it also belonged to the combatants to take; for if it depended on Himself alone, all men would be saved.'¹⁶³ St. Isidore of Pelusium: 'For God wills seriously, and in all ways, to assist those who are wallowing in vice, that he may deprive them of all excuse.'¹⁶⁴ St. Cyril of Jerusalem: 'God has opened the gate of eternal life, so that, as far as He is concerned, all may gain it without any thing to hinder them.'¹⁶⁵

But the doctrine of these Greek Fathers does not suit Jansenius, who has the temerity to say that they have spoken most imperfectly on grace: 'None have spoken in grace more imperfectly than the Greeks.'¹⁶⁶ In matter of grace, then, are we not to follow the teaching of the Greek Fathers, who were the first masters and columns of the Church? Perhaps the doctrine of the Greeks, especially in this important matter, was different from that of the Latin Church? On the contrary, it is certain that the true doctrine of faith came from the Greek to the Latin Church; so that, as St. Augustine wrote against Julian, who opposed to him the authority of the Greek Fathers, there can be no

donbt that the faith of the Latins is the same as that of the Greeks. Whom, then, are we to follow? Shall we follow Jansenius, whose errors have been already condemned as heretical by the Church, who had the audacity to say that even the just have not the grace requisite to enable them to keep certain precepts; and that man merits and demerits, even though he acts through necessity, provided he is not forced by violence; these and all his other errors springing from his most false system of *the delectation relatively victorious*, of which we shall speak at length when we confute him in chapter iii.

But since the Greek Fathers do not satisfy Jansenius, let us see what the Latins say on this subject. But they in no wise differ from the Greeks. St. Jerome says, 'Man can do no good work without Him, who, in giving free will, did not refuse His grace to aid every single work.'¹⁶⁷ Mark the words 'did not refuse His grace for every single work.' St. Ambrose: 'He would never come and knock at the door, unless He wished to enter; it is our fault that He does not always enter.'¹⁶⁸ St. Leo: 'Justly does He insist on the command, since He furnishes beforehand aid to keep it.'¹⁶⁹ St. Hilary: 'Now the grace of justification has abounded through one gift to all men.'¹⁷⁰ Innocent I.: 'He gives to man daily remedies; and unless we put confidence in them and depend upon them, we shall never be able to overcome human errors.'¹⁷¹ St. Augustine: 'It is not imputed to you as a sin if you are ignorant against your will, but if you neglect to learn that of which you are ignorant. Nor is it imputed as a sin that you do not bind up your wounded limbs, but (mark this) that you despise Him who is willing to cure you. These are your own sins; for no man is deprived of the knowledge of how to seek with benefit to himself.'¹⁷² In another place: 'Therefore, if the soul is ignorant what she is to do, it proceeds from her not having yet learned; but she will receive this knowledge if she has made a good use of what she has already received; for she has received that she can piously and diligently seek; if she will' (mark the words) 'she has received power to seek piously and diligently.'¹⁷³ So that every one receives at least the remote grace to seek; and if he makes good use

of this, he will receive the proximate grace to perform that which at first he could not do. St. Augustine founds all this on the principle, that no man sins in doing that which he cannot help; therefore, if a man sins in any thing, he sins in that he might have avoided it by the grace of God, which is wanting to no man: 'No one sins in that which cannot any how be helped. But a man does sin, therefore it might have been helped; but only by His aid, who cannot be deceived.' An evident reason, by which it becomes quite clear (as we shall have to show further on, when we speak of the sin of the obstinate), that if the grace necessary to observe the commandments were wanting, there would be no sin.

St Thomas teaches the same in several places. In one place, in explaining the text (Heb. xii.), "Who wills all men to be saved," he says, 'and therefore grace is wanting to no man, but (as far as God is concerned) is communicated to all; as the sun is present even to the blind.'¹⁷⁴ So that as the sun sheds its light upon all, and only those are deprived of it who voluntarily blind themselves to its rays, so God communicates to all men grace to observe the law; and men are lost simply because they will not avail themselves of it. In another place: 'It belongs to Divine providence to provide all men with what is necessary to salvation, if only there be no impediment on man's part.'¹⁷⁵ If, then, God gives all men the graces necessary for salvation, and if actual grace is necessary to overcome temptations, and to observe the commandments, we must necessarily conclude that He gives all men either immediately or mediately actual grace to do good; and when mediately, no further grace is necessary to enable them to put in practice the means (such as prayer) of obtaining actual proximate grace. In another place, on the words of St. John's gospel, "No man cometh to Me, &c." he says, 'If the heart of man be not lifted up, it is from no defect on the part of Him who draws it, who, as far as He is concerned, never fails; but from an impediment caused by him who is being drawn.' Scotus says the same: 'He wills to save all men, so far as rests with Him, and with His antecedent will, by which He has given them the ordinary gifts necessary to salvation.'¹⁷⁶ The

Council of Cologne: ‘Although no one is converted except he is drawn by the Father, yet let no one pretend to excuse himself on the plea of not being drawn. He stands at the gate, and knocks by the internal and the external Word.’¹⁷⁷

Nor did the Fathers speak without warrant of the Holy Scriptures; for God in several places most clearly assures us, that He does not neglect to assist us with His grace, if we are willing to avail ourselves of it either, for perseverance, if we are in a state of justification, or for conversion if we are in sin: “I stand at the gate and knock; if any man shall hear My voice and open to Me the gate, I will come in to him” (Apoc. iii. 20). Bellarmine reasons well on this text, that our Lord, who knows that man cannot open without His grace, would knock in vain at the door of his heart, unless He had first conferred on him the grace to open when he will. This is exactly what St. Thomas teaches in explaining the text; he says that God gives every one the grace necessary for salvation, that he may correspond to it if he will: ‘God by His most liberal will gives grace to every one that prepares himself: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” And therefore the grace of God is wanting to no one, but communicates itself to all men, as far as it is concerned.’¹⁷⁸ In another place he says, ‘It is the business of God’s providence to provide every one with what is necessary to salvation.’ So that as St. Ambrose said: The Lord knocks at the gate, because He truly wishes to enter; if He does not enter, or if after entering He does not remain in our souls, it is because we prevent His entering, or drive Him out when He has entered: ‘Because He comes, and knocks at the door, He always wishes to enter; but it is through us that He does not always go in, nor always remain.’¹⁷⁹

“What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it? Was it that I expected that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?” (Is. v. 4.) Bellarmine says on these words, ‘If He had not given the power to bring forth grapes, how could God say, “I expected?” And if God had not given to all men the grace necessary for salvation, He could not have said to the Jews, “What is there that I ought to

have done more?" for they could have answered, that if they had not yielded fruit, it was for lack of necessary assistance. Bellarmine says the same on the words of our Lord: "How often would I have gathered together thy children, and thou wouldst not" (St. Matt. xxiii. 37): 'How did He wish to be sought for by the unwilling, unless He helps them that they may be able to be willing?'¹⁸⁰

"We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple," (Ps. xlvii. 10). On this St. Bernard observes: 'Mercy is in the midst of the temple, not in any hole and corner, because there is no acceptance of persons with God; it is placed in public, it is offered to all, and no one is without it, except he who refuses it.'¹⁸¹

"Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?" (Rom. ii. 4.) You see that it is through his own malice that the sinner is not converted, because he despises the riches of the Divine goodness which calls him, and never ceases to move him to conversion by His grace. God hates sin; but at the same time never ceases loving the sinful soul while it remains on earth, and always gives it the assistance it requires for salvation: "But thou sparest all, because they are Thine, O Lord, who lovest souls" (Wisd. xi. 27). Hence we see, says Bellarmine, that God does not refuse grace to resist temptations to any sinner, however obstinate and blinded he may be: 'Assistance to avoid new sin is always at hand for all men, either immediately or mediately' (*i. e.* by means of prayer), so that they may ask further aid from God, by the help of which they will avoid sin.'¹⁸² Here we may quote what God says by Ezechiel: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (ch. xxxiii. 11). St. Peter says the same: "He beareth patiently for your sakes, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). If therefore God wishes that all should actually be converted, it must necessarily be held that He gives to all the grace which they need for actual conversion.

I know well that there are theologians who maintain that God refuses to certain obstinate sinners even sufficient

grace. And, among others, they avail themselves of a position of St. Thomas, who says: 'But although they who are in sin cannot through their own power avoid putting or interposing an obstacle to grace, unless they are prevented by grace, as we have shown; nevertheless, this also is imputed to them as a sin, because this defect is left in them from previous sin—as a drunken man is not excused from murder committed in that drunkenness which was incurred by his own fault. Besides, although he who is in sin has not this in his own power that he altogether avoid sin, yet he has power at this present moment to avoid this or that sin, as has been said; so that whatever he commits, he commits voluntarily; and therefore it is properly imputed to him as sin.'¹⁸³ From this they gather that St. Thomas intends to say that sinners can indeed avoid particular sins, but not all sins; because in punishment for sins previously committed they are deprived of all actual grace.

But we answer, that here St. Thomas is not speaking of actual, but of habitual or sanctifying grace, without which the sinner cannot keep himself long from falling into new sins, as he teaches in several places.¹⁸⁴ And that he means the same in the passage just quoted is clear from the context, which we must here transcribe, in order to understand the true meaning of the saint. In the first place, the title of chapter clx., where the quotation occurs, is as follows: 'That man, when he is in sin, cannot avoid sin without grace.' The very title shows that St. Thomas intended no more than he has said in the other places which we have referred to. Moreover, in the course of the chapter he says,¹⁸⁵ 'For when the mind of man has declined from the state of uprightness, it is manifest that it has fallen from its relation, 'order,' (*ordo*)* to its true end. . . . Whensoevcr, therefore, any thing shall have occurred to the mind conducive to the inordinate end, but improper for the true end, it will be chosen, unless the mind be brought back to its due relation, so as to prefer its true end to all others; and this is the effect of grace. But while any thing repugnant to our last end is the object of our choice, it puts

* See App.

a hindrance, in the way of the grace which conducts us to that end; whence it is manifest that, after sinning, man cannot altogether abstain from sin, before he is brought back by grace to the due order. And hence the opinion of the Pelagians is shown to be absurd, that man, being in sin, can without grace avoid (fresh) sin.' And then he goes on with the sentence quoted above: 'But although they,' &c., of which our opponents make use. So that, in the first place, the intention of St. Thomas is not to prove that some sinners are deprived of all actual grace, and therefore, being unable to avoid all sin, they do commit sin, and are worthy of punishment; but his intention is to prove against the Pelagians, that a man who remains without sanctifying grace cannot abstain from sinning. And we see that he is here certainly speaking of sanctifying grace, for this is that which alone brings the soul back to the right order. It is of this same sanctifying grace that he intends to speak, when he says immediately after, 'Except he be prevented by the assistance of grace;' by which he means, that if the sinner is not prevented, that is, is not previously informed (*informato*) by grace, and brought back to the right order of holding God to be his last end, he cannot avoid committing fresh sins. And this is the meaning of the Thomists; for instance, of Ferrariensis (Silvestre) and Father Gonet, in their comments on this passage.¹⁶⁶ But without having recourse to other authors, it is quite clear from what St. Thomas himself says in his *Summa*, where he discusses the same point, and brings forward the identical reasons in the same words as in the 160th chapter of his book *Contra Gentes*; and there he expressly says, that he is only speaking of habitual or sanctifying grace.

And it is impossible that the holy doctor could have meant otherwise, since he elsewhere teaches, that on the one hand God's grace is never wanting to any one, as he says in his commentary on St. John: 'But lest you might suppose that this effect was consequent on the removal of the true light, the Evangelist, to obviate this opposition, adds, that was the true light, which enlightens every man. For the Word enlightens, so far as He is concerned, because on His part He is wanting to no one, but wishes all

men to be saved. But if any one is not enlightened, this is the fault of the man who turns himself away from the light that would enlighten him.'¹⁸⁷ And, on the other hand, he teaches that there is no sinner so lost and abandoned by grace, as not to be able to lay aside his obstinacy, and to unite himself to the will of God, which he certainly cannot do without the assistance of grace: 'During this life there is no man who cannot lay aside obstinacy of mind, and so conform to the Divine will.'¹⁸⁸ In another place he says, 'So long as the use of free will remains to a man in this life he can prepare himself for grace by being sorry for his sins.'¹⁸⁹ But no one can make an act of sorrow for sin without grace. In another place he says, 'No man in this life can be so obstinate in evil, but that it is possible for him to co-operate to his own deliverance.'¹⁹⁰ 'To co-operate' necessarily implies grace to co-operate with. In another place he observes, on the text of St. Paul, "He wills all to be saved," 'Therefore the grace of God is wanting to no man: but as far as it is concerned, it communicates itself to all.'¹⁹¹ Again, on the same words, 'God, so far as He is concerned, is prepared to give grace to all men Those, therefore, alone are deprived of grace, who permit a hindrance to grace to exist in themselves; and therefore they cannot be excused if they sin.'¹⁹² And when St. Thomas says, 'God is prepared to give grace to all,' he does not mean actual grace, but only sanctifying grace; so that Cardinal Gotti¹⁹³ justly contradicts those who say that God keeps ready at hand the aids necessary for salvation, but in matter of fact does not give them to all. Of what use would it be to a sick man (says this learned author) if the physician only kept the remedies ready, and then would not apply them? Then he concludes (quite in point to our argument) that we must necessarily say, 'God not only offers, but also confers on every individual, even on infidels and hardened sinners, help sufficient to observe the commandments, whether it be proximate or remote.' For the rest, St. Thomas says, that it is only the sins of the devils and the damned that cannot be wiped out by penance; but, on the other hand, 'to say that there is any sin in this life of which a man

cannot repent, is erroneous because this doctrine would derogate from the power of grace.' ¹⁹⁴ If grace were wanting to any one, certainly he could not repent. Moreover, as we have already seen, St. Thomas expressly teaches in several places, and especially in his comment on Heb. xii., that God, as far as He is concerned, refuses to no man the grace necessary for conversion: 'The grace of God is wanting to no man; but, as far as it is concerned, communicates itself to all.' So that the learned author of the Theology for the use of the seminary of Peterkau says, 'It is a calumny to impute to St. Thomas that he taught that any sinners were totally deserted by God.' ¹⁹⁵ Bellarmine makes a sound distinction on this point, and says, that for avoiding fresh sins every sinner has at all times sufficient assistance, at any rate mediately: 'The necessary and sufficient assistance for the avoidance of sin is given by God's goodness to all men at all times, either immediately or mediately . . . We say *or mediately*, because it is certain that some men have not that help by which they can immediately avoid sin, but yet have the help which enables them to obtain from God greater safeguards, by the assistance of which they will avoid sins' ¹⁹⁶ But for the grace of conversion, he says that this is not given at all times to the sinner; but that no one will be ever so far left to himself 'as to be surely and absolutely deprived of God's help through all this life, so as to have cause to despair of salvation.'

And so say the theologians who follow St. Thomas—thus Soto: 'I am absolutely certain, and I believe that all the holy doctors who are worthy of the name were always most positive, that no one was ever deserted by God in this mortal life.' ¹⁹⁷ And the reason is evident; for if the sinner was quite abandoned by grace, either his sins afterwards committed could no longer be imputed to him, or he would be under an obligation to do that which he had no power to fulfil; but it is a positive rule of St. Augustine, that there is never sin in that which cannot be avoided: 'No one sins in that which cannot any how be avoided.' ¹⁹⁸ And this is agreeable to the teaching of the Apostle: "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above

that which you are able ; but will also make with the temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). Which 'issue' means the Divine assistance, which God always gives to the tempted to enable them to resist, as St. Cyprian explains it : 'He will make with the temptation a way of escape.' And Primasius more clearly : 'He will so order the issue that we shall be able to endure ; that is, in temptation he will strengthen you with the help of His grace, so that ye may be able to bear it.' St. Augustine and St. Thomas go so far as to say that God would be unjust and cruel, if He obliged any one to a command which he could not keep. St. Augustine says, 'It is the deepest injustice to reckon any one guilty of sin for not doing that which he could not do.'¹⁹⁹ And St. Thomas : 'God is not more cruel than man ; but it is reckoned cruelty in a man to oblige a person by law to do that which he cannot fulfil ; therefore we must by no means imagine this of God.'²⁰⁰ 'It is, however, different,' he says, 'when it is through his own neglect that he has not the grace to be able to keep the commandments ;'²⁰¹ which properly means, when man neglects to avail himself of the remote grace of prayer, in order to obtain the proximate grace to enable him to keep the law, as the Council of Trent teaches : 'God does not command impossibilities ; but by commanding admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for that which is beyond your power ; and by His help enables you to do it.'

St. Augustine repeats his decision, that there is no sin in what cannot be avoided, in many other places. In one he says, 'Whether there be iniquity or whether there be justice, if it was not in the man's power, there can be no just reward, no just punishment.'²⁰² Elsewhere he says, 'Finally, if no power is given them to abstain from their works, we cannot hold that they sin.'²⁰³ Again, 'The devil, indeed, suggests ; but with the help of God it is in our power to choose or to refuse his suggestions. And so, when by God's help it is in your power, why do you not rather determine to obey God than him ?'²⁰⁴ Again, 'No one, therefore, is answerable for what he has not received.'²⁰⁵ Again, 'No one is worthy of blame for not doing that

which he cannot do.'²⁰⁶ So St. Jerome, 'We are not forced by necessity to be either virtuous or vicious ; for where there is necessity, there is neither condemnation nor crown.'²⁰⁷ Tertullian : 'For a law would not be given to him who had it not in his power to observe it duly.'²⁰⁸ Marcus the hermit, 'Hidden grace assists us ; but it depends on us to do or not to do good according to our strength.'²⁰⁹ So also St. Irenæus, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Chrysostom, and others.

Nor is there any difficulty in what St. Thomas says, that grace is denied to some persons, in punishment of original sin :²¹⁰ 'To whomsoever the assistance of grace is given, it is given through simple mercy ; but from those to whom it is not given, it is withheld justly in punishment of previous sin, or at least of original sin, as Augustine says.'²¹¹ For, as Cardinal Gotti well observes,²¹² St. Augustine and St. Thomas are speaking of actual proximate grace to satisfy the precepts of faith and charity, of which, indeed, St. Thomas is speaking in this place ; but for all this they do not intend to deny that God gives every man interior grace, by means of which he may at any rate obtain by prayer the grace of faith and of salvation ; since, as we have already seen, these holy doctors do not doubt that God grants to every man at least remote grace to satisfy the precepts. Here we may add the authority of St. Prosper, who says, 'All men enjoy some measure of heavenly teaching ; and though the measure of grace be small, it is sufficient to be a remedy for some, and to be a testimony for all.'²¹³

Nor could it be understood otherwise ; for if it were true that any had sinned for want of even remote sufficient grace, withheld through original sin being imputed to them as a fault, it would follow that the liberty of will, which by a figure of speech we are said to have had in the sin of Adam, would be sufficient to make us actual sinners. But this cannot be said, as it is expressly condemned in the first proposition of Michael Baius, who said, 'That liberty which caused sin to be voluntary and free in its cause, viz. in original sin, and in the liberty of Adam when sinning, is sufficient to (cause) formal sin (in us), and to make us deserve punishment.' Against this proposition we may make use of what Bellarmine said, that to commit a personal

sin distinct from the sin of Adam a new exertion of free will is requisite, and a free will distinct from that of Adam, otherwise there is no distinct sin;²¹⁴ according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, who teaches, 'For a personal sin, absolute personal liberty is requisite.'²¹⁵ Further, with respect to the baptized, the Council of Trent has declared, that in them there remains nothing to condemn: 'God hates nothing in the regenerate; for there is no condemnation to them who are truly buried with Christ by baptism unto death.' And it is added, that concupiscence is not left in us as a punishment, 'but for our trial; and it cannot harm those who do not consent to it.'²¹⁶ On the contrary, the concupiscence left in us would do exceeding great harm to man, if, on account of it, God denied him even the remote grace necessary to obtain salvation.

From all this several theologians conclude, that to say that God refuses to any one sufficient help to enable him to keep the commandments would be contrary to the faith, because in that case God would oblige us to impossibilities. So says F. Nugnez: 'God never refused aid sufficient to keep the commandments, otherwise they could not be in any way fulfilled; and thus we should have the heresy of Luther back again, that God has obliged men to impossibilities.'²¹⁷ And in another place, 'It is of faith, so that the opposite doctrine is a manifest heresy, that every man, while he is alive, can do penance for his sins. And Father Ledesma, 'It is a certain truth of faith, that that is not sin which is not in the free power of man.'²¹⁸ Giovenino says, that the sinner becomes guilty through the exercise of free will, in choosing voluntarily this or that sin; though at the time he is necessitated to sin, because he is without actual grace sufficient to deliver him from all sin. But this doctrine, that a man when fallen sins, not having liberty to do otherwise than to choose what sin he will commit, and is necessitated to commit some sin, justly offends Monseigneur de Saléon, Archbishop of Vienne, who, in his book *Jansenius Redivivus*, writes as follows: 'Who will endure to hear that a man once fallen, being deprived of grace, can enjoy no other liberty than that of choosing one sin rather than another, being necessitated to sin somehow?'²¹⁹ So that

a criminal condemned to death, who has no other liberty allowed him than to choose whether he will die by the sword, by poison, or by fire, may be said, when he has made his choice, to die a voluntary and free death. And how can sin be imputed to a man who *must* sin in some way or another? The 67th of the condemned Propositions of Baius is as follows: 'Man sins damnably even in that which he does through necessity.' How can there be liberty, where there is necessity to sin? Jansenius answers, that the liberty of will, which by a figure of speech we are said to have had in Adam's sin, is sufficient to make us sinners. But this too was condemned in Baius' first proposition, 'That liberty;' &c. (as above, p. 259).

Our opponents go on to say, that though the sinner abandoned by grace cannot avoid all mortal sins collectively, yet he can avoid each sin distributively, or individually, 'by a simple suspension, or negation of activity,' as they say. But this cannot be admitted for several reasons. First, because when a vehement temptation is assailing us, which it requires much strength to resist, it cannot morally be overcome (as all theologians agree) except by the assistance of grace, or else by yielding to another, but opposite, vicious passion; so that a sinner deprived of grace would be irremediably necessitated to sin in one or the other way; which it is horrible to affirm, as we have already shown. Secondly, when we are urged by a great concupiscence to sin in a particular way, there is not always, nay, it seldom happens that there is, another improper motive urging us to the contrary course, of sufficient force to hinder us from committing the first sin; so that when this second motive is absent or weak, then it would be necessary for the sinner to commit that particular sin to which he feels inclined. Thirdly, this abstaining from sin 'by a simple negation of activity,' as they say, can hardly be imagined in sins against the negative precepts; but, as Tourneley and Gotti well observe, is altogether impossible in cases where a positive precept obliges us to do some supernatural act; as, for instance, to make an act of faith, hope, love, and contrition: for, as these acts are supernatural, they necessarily require the super-

natural assistance of God to enable us to perform them. So that, at any rate in this case, if grace were wanting man would be necessitated to sin, by not satisfying the positive precept, although he was unable to avoid the sin. But, to assert this is, as F. Bannez observes, contrary to the faith: 'A man cannot sin, without having first actually received an inspiration of Divine grace. We assert this conclusion to be certainly of faith; because no one sins in not doing that which he cannot do, as it is certain *de fide*; but a man to whom nothing more is given than the bare faculties of human nature, has no power to act above nature, and therefore does not sin in omitting to perform a supernatural act.'²²⁰

Nor will it do to say that, if the sinner is deprived of grace, he is deprived of it by his own fault; and therefore, though he is deprived of grace, yet he sins. For Cardinal Gotti well replies to this, that God can justly punish the sinner for his previous faults, but not for his future transgressions of precepts which he is no longer able to fulfil. If a servant, he says, were sent to a place, and if he, through his own fault, fell into a pit, his master might punish him for his carelessness in falling, and even for his after disobedience, if means (such as a rope or ladder) were given him to get out of the pit, and he would not avail himself of them; but supposing that his master did not help him to get out, he would be a tyrant if he ordered him to go on, and punished him for not going on. Hence he concludes, 'When, therefore, a man has by sin fallen into the ditch, and become unable to proceed on his way to eternal life, though God may punish him for this fault, and also if he refuses the offer of grace to enable him to proceed; yet if God chose to leave him to his own weakness, He cannot without injustice oblige him to proceed on the way, nor punish him if he does not proceed.'²²¹

Moreover, our opponents adduce many texts of Scripture where this abandonment is apparently expressed: "Blind the heart of this people . . . lest they see with their eyes . . . and be converted, and I heal them" (Is. vi. 10); "We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed; let us forsake her" (Jerem. li. 9); "Add thou

iniquity upon their iniquity, and let them not come into Thy justice" (Ps. lxxviii. 28); "For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections" (Rom. i. 26); "He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will He hardeneth" (Rom. ix. 18); and others similar. But it is usually and easily answered to all these in general, that in the Holy Scriptures God is often said to do what He only permits; so that if we would not blaspheme with Calvin, and say that God positively destines and determines some persons to sin, we must say that God permits some sinners, in penalty of their faults, to be on the one hand assailed by vehement temptations (which is the evil from which we pray God to deliver us when we say, "Lead us not into temptation"); and, on the other hand, that they remain morally abandoned in their sin; so that their conversion, and the resistance they should make to temptation, although neither impossible nor desperate, is yet, through their faults and their bad habits, very difficult; since, in their laxity of life, they have only very rare and weak desires and motions to resist their bad habits, and to regain the way of salvation. And this is the imperfect obstinacy of the hardened sinner, which St. Thomas describes: 'He is hardened, who cannot easily co-operate in his escape from sin: and this is imperfect obstinacy, because a man may be obstinate in this life, if he has a will so fixed upon sin, that no motions towards good arise, except very weak ones.'²²² On one side the mind is obscured, the will is hardened against God's inspirations, and attached to the pleasures of sense, so as to despise and feel disgust for spiritual blessings—the sensual passions and appetites reign in the soul through the bad habits that have been acquired; on the other side the illuminations and the callings of God are, by its own fault, rendered scarcely efficacious to move the soul; which has so despised them, and made so bad a use of them, that it even feels a certain aversion towards them, because it does not want to be disturbed in its sensual gratifications. All these things constitute moral abandonment; and when a sinner has once fallen into it, it is only with the utmost difficulty that he can escape from his miserable state, and bring himself to live a well-regulated life.

In order to escape, and pass at once from such disorder to a state of salvation, a great and extraordinary grace would be requisite ; but God seldom confers such a grace on these obstinate sinners. Sometimes He gives it, says St. Thomas, and chooses them for vessels of mercy, as the Apostle calls them, in order to make known His goodness ; but to the rest He justly refuses it, and leaves them in their unhappy state, in order to show forth His justice and power : ‘ Sometimes,’ says the angel of the schools, ‘ out of the abundance of His goodness He prevents with His assistance even those who put a hindrance in the way of His grace, and converts them, &c. And as He does not enlighten all the blind, nor cure all the sick, so neither does He assist all who place an impediment to His grace, so as to convert them.’ This is what the Apostle means when he says, that God, “to show forth His anger, and to make His power known, endured with much patience the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory” (Rom. ix. 22, 23). Then he adds, ‘ But since out of the number of those who are involved in the same sins, there are some to whom God gives the grace of conversion, while others He only endures, or allows to go on in the course of things, we are not to inquire the reason why He converts some and not others. For the Apostle says, “ Has not the potter power over the clay, to make of the same mass one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour ? ” ’ 223

We do not then deny (to bring this point to a conclusion) that there is such a thing as the moral abandonment of some obstinate sinners, so that their conversion is morally impossible ; that is to say, very difficult. And this concession is abundantly sufficient for the laudable object which our opponents have in defending their opinion, which is to bridle evil livers, and to induce them to consider, before they come to fall into such a deplorable state. But then it is cruelty (as Petrocensis well says) to take from them all hope, and entirely to shut against them the way of salvation, by the doctrine that they have fallen into such a complete abandonment, as to be deprived of all ac-

tual grace to enable them to avoid fresh sins, and to be converted; at any rate, mediately by means of prayer (which is not refused to any man while he lives, as we shall prove in the next section), whereby they can afterwards obtain abundant help for placing themselves in a state of salvation; since the fear of total abandonment would not only lead them to despair, but also to give themselves more completely to their vices, in the belief that they are altogether destitute of grace; so that they have no hope left of escaping eternal damnation.

CHAPTER III.

EXPOSITION AND CONFUTATION OF JANSENIUS' SYSTEM OF "DELECTATION RELATIVELY VICTORIOUS."*

1. IN the next chapter we will, as we promised, demonstrate that the grace of prayer is given to all men. But this doctrine does not please Jansenius; he goes so far as to call it an hallucination: 'It is an hallucination to think that the grace of prayer is always present to a man.'²²⁴ On his system, he considers that without *the delectation relatively victorious* we cannot pray; but this delight is not granted to all men, therefore (he adds) all men have not sufficient grace and power to fulfil the commandments; for many are without even the remote grace to enable them to pray as they ought, or indeed to pray at all. 'Since, therefore,' he continues, 'most men either do not ask for grace to enable them to fulfil the law, or do not ask for it as is necessary; and since God does not give all men the grace either to pray fervently, or even to pray at all, it is most evident that many of the faithful are without that sufficient grace, and consequently, without that perpetual power of fulfilling the one precept (of the moment) which some theologians proclaim.'²²⁵ Before, then, we prove our own position, we must confute his pernicious system, from which all his errors are derived; and we must show that it is he, not we, who are hallucinated.

All know the five propositions of Jansenius which were

* See App.

condemned by the Church as heretical. Now, as Tourneley proves, all these propositions follow, if you once grant his system of preponderating delectation, on which Jansenius founds all his doctrine.²²⁶ F. Ignatius Graveson says the same: 'From this pernicious principle Jansenius and his followers derived these erroneous conclusions (the five propositions), which are most intimately connected with, and form one system with, that principle.'²²⁷ So F. Berti, who says, that 'from the principle of the two invincible delectations, as from a root, almost all the other Jansenist errors sprung, and especially the five condemned propositions.'²²⁸ And Father Fortunato da Breseia, in his lately published book, called *A Confutation of the System of Cornelius Jansenius*, proves to demonstration that, admitting his system, you must necessarily admit the five condemned propositions.

Let us, therefore, distinctly exhibit this system. He says, that the will of man, since the fall of Adam, is unable to do otherwise than to follow either the pleasure of grace (which he calls the celestial delectation), or that of concupiscence (which he calls earthly delectation), according as one prevails over the others. So that if the heavenly delectation is greater, then it necessarily overcomes the other; if the earthly delectation preponderates, then the will necessarily yields to it.

And here we must remark, that Jansenius does not hereby intend deliberate or consequent delectation, for thus he would be in accord with all Catholic doctors; since, when the pleasure we take in a thing is deliberate, and embraced not from necessity but from free choice of the will, then certainly it is necessary that the will should act according to the delectation. But Jansenius intends indeliberate delectation, and in this sense he understands the celebrated dictum of St. Augustine: 'It is necessary that our act should follow the greater pleasure.'²²⁹ Now, as we shall presently show, this sentence must necessarily be understood of deliberate and consequent delectation; but Jansenius falsely interprets (and on this false interpretation founds his whole doctrine) it to mean indeliberate delectation, antecedent to any act of the will. So that, in his system, there is no such thing as sufficient grace; since it is

either of too little weight, and necessarily insufficient, or else it preponderates over the concupiscence, and is then necessarily efficacious; since he makes the whole efficacy of grace consist in the relative preponderance of the indeliberate delectation: 'There will be no such thing as sufficient grace' (these are his words); 'but it will be either efficient, or so inefficient that no act can follow from it.'²³⁰

When this system is once laid down, all the five condemned propositions follow as necessary conclusions from it. Let us omit the others, and speak here exclusively of the first and third, as being most to our purpose. The first is, 'Some commands of God are impossible to just men, who will and endeavour according to the strength they at present possess. Moreover, grace is wanting to them, whereby these precepts may become possible.' Some precepts (says he) become impossible even to the just, who will and strive to observe them, in proportion as they want the grace which should prevail over concupiscence: 'Unless the heavenly delectation is greater than the earthly, it cannot but happen that we are overcome by the infirmity of our will.'²³¹ And again: 'While carnal delectation is in vigour, it is impossible that the thought of virtue should prevail.'²³² Although, said Jansenius, grace considered absolutely in itself, and apart from act and circumstance, may be abundantly sufficient to move the will to virtue: nevertheless, relatively considered,—that is, when the carnal delectation is greater than the heavenly (for when the carnal preponderates over grace, it is always accompanied by the act of will),—then grace is completely insufficient to draw to itself the consent of the will. And, as Father Graveson well observes, the absolute power to keep the commandments, which many would have in virtue of grace, whenever it is derived from a grace which is less than the concupiscence, is actually no longer power, but a true impotence; since the will is then entirely unable to act rightly, as the less weight cannot outweigh the greater.

How, then, can a man be blamed for not fulfilling the precept, when he is without grace even sufficient to enable him to do so? The objection is strong, and is most manifestly just; so much so, that Jansenius himself cannot help

putting it : 'How is it that they are not excused who are without this assistance, since without it they would not be able to fulfil the precept?'²³³ Let us see how he answers this question. The difficulty is great, therefore he attempts to dis-embarrass himself of it in several ways. First, he answers, that inability excuses, when a man wishes to fulfil the precept, but cannot; but not when he does not wish to fulfil it. But we answer, that when the will, according to his principles, is necessarily obliged to yield to the indeliberate pleasure of the concupiscence, because of its outweighing grace, it is then physically impossible for a man to wish to fulfil the precept; since, supposing the preponderance of the carnal pleasure, grace has no longer sufficient active strength to overcome it. And of this principle Jansenius has no doubt, for he says that the stronger delectation intrinsically determines, and insuperably moves the will to accept it, so that the will is then completely deprived of relative power to resist. 'Whence it follows,' says Father Graveson, 'that this necessity, according to the doctrine of Jansenius and his disciples, is not a moral, but an antecedent and invincible necessity, which cannot be admitted without open heresy.' Jansenius says, moreover, that except the delectation of grace preponderates, it is as impossible for a man to fulfil the precept, as it is 'for one without wings to fly,'²³⁴ 'for the blind to see, for the deaf to hear, or for a man with broken legs to walk straight.'²³⁵ It would be the same for a man who had eyes, but was deprived of light; because it is no more physically impossible for a blind man without eyes to see, than it is for one who has eyes, but is without light; for physical impossibility is simply that which exceeds the natural powers.

So that any one can see how baseless is this first reply of Jansenius. And the second is still more so. He says that all the commandments are possible to man, just so far as God can give him grace to make him keep them: 'All men are said to be able to believe, to be able to love God . . . for this power is nothing else than a passive flexibility of capacity, through which they are able to receive faith and charity.'²³⁶ So that, according to Jansenius, man's sin in breaking the commandments is in proportion to his

capacity of receiving grace to fulfil them. But by this rule we might say that the blind can see, and the deaf hear, because God can make them see and hear ; but for all that, it is physically impossible for the blind to see, or the deaf to hear, unless God gives them the power. So that to say that it is sufficient reason to call a precept possible, if it is possible to man in case God gives him the power, is either nonsense or fraud, intended to hide the truth : for I ask, what help can a man have from that grace, which he might have, but has not at the time ? It is the same as saying, a man might observe all the precepts if he could observe them ; but at present he cannot. When the sick man, says St. Augustine, needs care to cure him, he cannot get well without care, however he may wish it : ‘ Nor yet can he become well when he will, but when he is healed by the use of proper care.’²³⁷ Jansenius’ third answer is, that liberty of will consists entirely in taking pleasure in, and in knowing the delightful object : ‘ Wherefore’ (these are his words), ‘ after surveying the arguments of Augustine, on which the whole doctrine of free will depends, we think that it is nothing but knowledge and delectation, or a pleasurable complacency in the object which has the power over the free will to make it accept or reject. . . . Concerning knowledge we are not very particular, for scarcely any one doubts that it is necessary to an act of will.’²³⁸ So that, according to Jansenius, the liberty of man consists on the one hand in his complacency in the delectation ; on the other hand in his knowledge of the object, or, in other words, in that judgment indifferent (equally applicable either to good or evil) whereby he knows the good and evil of the action ; as, for instance, in murder, he knows the evil of the sin and the pleasure of the revenge. Hence he says, in another place, that the wicked sin in proportion as they know by means of the law the malice of sin . ‘ The first effect of the law is confessed to be, to give the knowledge of sin ;’ and quotes the text of St. Paul : “ I did not know sin but by the law” (Rom. vii. 7).²³⁹ In this he followed Calvin, who said : ‘ The object of the law is to render man inexcusable ; and this would not be a bad definition of it—it is the knowledge of the conscience distinguishing between right and wrong, for the purpose of

taking away the pretext of ignorance.'²⁴⁰ But we may answer that the indifferent judgment, or the knowledge of good and evil which belongs only to the intellect, can never constitute the freedom of choice which belongs altogether to the will ; for liberty consists simply in the free choice of the will to do or not to do a thing.

Jansenius gives a fourth reply ; but this is more incongruous and untenable than any of the former. He says, that for sin it is not requisite to have the liberty of indifference, so that a man should be free from all necessity of sinning ; but that it is enough to have a liberty of exercise or of choice, so as to be able to abstain from the particular sin to which our concupiscence tempts us, but only by committing another : ' So that' (these are his words) ' a man may act, and abstain from this particular sin, at least by committing another ;'²⁴¹ whereby he places man in such a dilemma, that in order to avoid one sin he must necessarily commit another : and he says that such a liberty is sufficient to make a man guilty, though he may be necessitated to sin in one way or another. Thus he explains himself more clearly in another place : ' The will of fallen man by no means ceases to be free in committing sin, although it be bound by a certain general necessity of sinning ; for it will be free in its exercise (as they say), necessitated in the kind of thing it is to choose.'²⁴² In answer to this we might repeat all that we said in cap. 2. p. 260 against Giovenino, who says that all sinners, though deprived of sufficient grace, yet sin by this liberty of exercise. But what kind of liberty is this, that a man, whether he be good or bad, could be called guilty, though he is necessitated to sin in one way or another ? St. Thomas says, that it is heresy to maintain that the will merits or demerits when it acts through necessity, although not compelled by violence to act : ' Some have asserted that the will of man is necessarily moved to choose a thing . . . but they still did not assert that the will is forced . . . But this opinion is heretical, for it destroys the rule of merit or demerit in human actions ; for there seems to be nothing meritorious or otherwise in a man acting from necessity in a way that he cannot help.'²⁴³ Moreover, when a man is necessitated to commit one or another sin, according to the

general consent of all theologians, if he chooses the less sin, even though he voluntarily chooses it, he does not sin; because he is without the liberty which is required before an action can be imputed to him as sin. So that, in our case, when, by reason of a concupiscence that outweighs grace, a man has chosen the less of two sins, he does not sin.

But putting aside all these reflections, the direct answer is, that supposing Jansenius' principle of the pleasure relatively preponderating to be true, this liberty of exercise, to abstain from one sin by committing another, becomes quite impossible. His principle, as we have already explained, is, that when the carnal pleasure outweighs the heavenly, then the will is necessitated to consent to that individual pleasure to which it is physically drawn. And therefore he somewhere says, that the superior pleasure destroys the indifference of the will; for as a weight inclines the index of a balance, which before stood in equilibrium, so does the pleasure move the will to consent to that concupiscence to which it tempts it: 'Since (the carnal delight) by the persuasion of its motion causes that the man, who before the motion was indifferent whether he acted or not, should be by the very motion of the concupiscence impelled to one side or the other, like a balance into which a weight is put.'²⁴⁴ He says the same in another place, where he tries to refute those who will have it that the superior pleasure moves morally; and says that it does not draw and determine the will to accept the object proposed to it morally, but physically: 'Since that is called moral pre-determination, which is only in the object, when it as it were counsels, orders, or beseeches; but this (delectation) has its seat in the very power of the will, which it sets in motion by the intensity of the pleasure it gives, and by setting it in motion determines it; since it makes the will determine its own object, and therefore it may be said to pre-determine the will.'²⁴⁴ So that, according to Jansenius, the pleasure pre-determines the will to embrace the object to which it moves it, before the will determines itself. And that this is the true meaning of Jansenius the learned Diroys has no doubt, who on this account says,²⁴⁵ that Jansenius does not differ from the astrologers, who make the will of man subject to the

influence of the planets ; ‘ so that the will is determined in the choice of its object by any impression which may happen to precede its determination.’²⁴⁶ The Archbishop of Vienne says the same in his book *Baianism and Jansenism revived*: ‘ The Jansenists contend, that by a pleasure superior in degree the will is invincibly determined in its operation, without any respect to the future determination of the will itself.’²⁴⁷

Granting this system, how is the liberty of exercise possible ? since, according to Jansenius, the preponderating pleasure by itself pre-determines the will to accept it ; so that, as in the balance the lesser weight necessarily gives way to the larger, so does the will necessarily yield to the preponderating pleasure. So that, for instance, if any one is drawn by this pleasure to take another man’s property, it is true that he may be led to abstain from thieving by love for his own reputation ; but in cases where this love either does not exist, or is not greater than the pleasure of stealing, the love of reputation certainly cannot overcome, and then evidently all liberty of exercise ceases.

But let us now pass on to the third proposition of Jansenius : ‘ To merit and demerit in a state of fallen nature, man does not require freedom from necessity, but freedom from compulsion.’ He says then, that in order to merit or to sin, the liberty of indifference, which excludes necessity, is not wanted, but it is enough if the will is not repugnant. And he goes so far as to assert, that it is a paradox to say that the act of will is free, so far forth as the will is at liberty to accept or refuse the object. This proposition, also condemned as heretical, follows similarly from his system ; for supposing that the will, when moved by a preponderating pleasure, must necessarily obey it, it necessarily follows (as Jansenius shows), that it is sufficient for merit or demerit that a man should be willing to consent to the pleasure, although he cannot do otherwise than be willing, and is even physically necessitated to be so. F. Serry well maintains that it is a monstrous doctrine to say, ‘ that merit can co-exist with the necessity of acting.’²⁴⁸ And it was before this called heretical by St. Thomas, whose words, already quoted, I shall be pardoned for repeating here : ‘ Some have asserted that the will of man is neces-

sarily moved to choose a thing ; but they still did not assert that the will is forced. But this opinion is heretical, for it destroys the rule of merit and demerit in human actions ; for there seems to be nothing meritorious or otherwise in a man acting from necessity in any way that he cannot help.²⁴⁹ And with reason it is called heresy, for it is contrary to holy Scripture : “ God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able ; but will also make with the temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.” But Jansenius says, that at times man is so completely deprived of grace that he cannot resist temptations, and is necessitated to succumb to them. Moses said to the people : “ This commandment that I command thee this day is not above thee ” (Deut. xxx. 11). Again, “ Blessed is he that could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed ; and could do evil things, and hath not done them ” (Ecclus. xxxi. 10). Therefore it is not sufficient for merit that a man should act willingly, but it is necessary that he also act freely ; that is, that he should be able to neglect the commandments, and should not be necessitated to fulfil them ; and *vice versa* in sin, that he should have the grace to abstain, and that it should be his own fault if he does not abstain. Nor is the reply of the impious Theodore Beza valid here ; he says that the necessity does not depend on nature, but on original sin, by which man voluntarily deprived himself of liberty, and is therefore justly punished for sinning, though he be necessitated to sin ; for it may be answered, that if a servant had by his own fault broken his legs, his master would be unjust if, after having forgiven the fault, he commanded him to run, and punished him for not running. ‘ To hold a man guilty of sin,’ says St. Augustine, ‘ because he has not done what he could not do, is abominable iniquity and folly.’²⁵⁰

Moreover, supposing that man could merit or demerit when acting by necessity, without any balance of power to do otherwise, I do not know how it could be reconciled with the Scriptures, which say, “ You have your choice ; choose this day that which pleaseth you, whom you would rather serve, whether . . . the gods of the Amorites, &c. . . . but

as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Jos. xxiv. 15). A choice cannot be given where men act from necessity, and without liberty; so that this text clearly proves that man is free from necessity. 'A full power of choosing either side,' says Petavius on this passage, 'is clearly shown; so that the will, as it were suspended and placed in the middle, may choose whichever it likes of the two objects.'²⁵¹ The same is said in other parts of Scripture:

"I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.—Choose, therefore, life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. xxx. 19); "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added His commandments and precepts. Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him" (Ecclus. xv. 14-18). On the latter passage Petavius says: 'If the teacher had now to decide the present point, how could he more clearly express the freedom from necessity which man enjoys? If he lived among us, and judged from our point of view, he could not describe in more precise terms the nature and property of human liberty and of free-will, than he has done here.'²⁵² There are other texts to the same purpose: "I called, and you refused" (Prov. i. 24); "They have been rebellious to the light" (Job xxiv. 13); "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes" (Is. v. 2); "You always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii. 51). It is certainly the work of the Holy Spirit to call men, to enlighten their minds, and to move the will to good; but how can it be said that *he* refuses the call, that *he* rebels against the light, that *he* resists grace, who is destitute of preponderating grace, and therefore must necessarily yield to the prevailing concupiscence?

But what, says Jansenius, if Augustine before me has maintained this same theory, that we must necessarily do that which pleases us most, according to the well-known passage: 'It is necessary that we act according to that which delights us most.'²⁵³ Now, before we answer Jansenius, we must premise that St. Augustine, who had to con-

fute several heresies of his time, all on the subject of grace, and all contrary to one another, had to speak of it diffusely and upon different points of view, and is therefore in several places obscure. Hence it has come to pass, that not only each of the Catholic schools boasts of having him on its side, though their opinions are quite different, but also Calvin and Jansenius, whose errors have been condemned by the Church, have presumed to call him their patron. Calvin, writing against Pighius, says, 'We follow nothing but Augustine. . . . Pighius may squeak as he pleases, he will never make us allow that Augustine is not on our side.'²⁵⁴ And Jansenius puts forward Augustine as his sole teacher, so that he even called his book by the title of "Augustinus." And the Jansenists only call themselves Augustinians. From these premises we only wish to infer, that many passages of St. Augustine require explanation by comparison with other passages of his works, where he declares his true opinion, if we would not be misled. Now let us come to the point.

We have already explained, that this sentence of St. Augustine ought not and cannot be understood of indeliberate pleasure, antecedent to any co-operation of the will; but ought to be understood of deliberate and consequent pleasure; for in cases where man freely consents to the pleasure, then, certainly, it is necessary that he should act upon it. And this is proved by what Augustine says in other places, where he confounds pleasure with love, or rather, explains that the superior pleasure is nothing else than that deliberate love, and that affection, which, by our own free choice, predominates in us; in which pleasure, if we deliberately take delight, then it is necessary that we act upon it. So that in substance he simply says, that the will must act upon that which it deliberately loves the most; for in one place he says, that the pleasure is, as it were, the weight of the soul, which drags it along with it—'for pleasure is as it were the weight of the soul';²⁵⁵ and in another place, that this weight which draws each man's soul is his love—'My love is my weight.'²⁵⁶ This he explains more clearly in another place, where he says that we ought to be careful, 'by God's help, to be so disposed as not to

be tripped up by inferior things, and to take pleasure only in the higher things.'²⁵⁷ See how clearly he speaks of deliberate pleasure, freely accepted. In another place, 'What is it to be drawn by pleasure? To delight in the Lord; and He will give thee the petitions of thy heart.' Again, 'See how the Father draws! He delights us by teaching, not by laying us under necessity.'²⁵⁸ Again, 'If we wish to enjoy the pleasures of heaven, we must bridle unlawful pleasure; as when we fast, the appetite rises against us; this it does by pleasure (*i. e.* indeliberate), but we restrain it by the law of the governing reason.' So that, according to St. Augustine, the pleasure which incites us to break the law, may be freely repressed by man by means of the dominant reason, and by the help of grace. Hence he exhorts us: 'Let justice so delight you, as to conquer even lawful pleasures.' This is made still clearer by the context of the passage on which we are now disputing, where, after saying, 'We must needs act upon the greater pleasure,' he adds, 'It is clear that our life must be according to our pursuits, and our pursuits must be according to our affections (mark this). Therefore, if there are two contradictory things, the command of justice and the carnal habit, and both of them are loved, we shall pursue that which we love most.'²⁵⁹ So that when he says we must needs act according to that which delights us most, he only means that the will must necessarily act on that which it loves best: nor will it do to say, with Jansenius, that what gives most pleasure is most loved; for this is not always true, and St. Augustine expressly contradicts it when, in his confessions, he says of himself, 'I did not do that in which my affections took incomparably more pleasure, and which as soon as I would, I could do;'²⁶⁰ by which he means, that he was already moved by God with an indeliberate affection, which made virtue incomparably more pleasant to him than vice, and that he might easily have been virtuous if he would; but that he resisted grace, and refused to be virtuous, and abandoned himself to vice.

Further, if St. Augustine had believed that it was necessary for us to act upon the greater pleasure, he could never have said, 'When the unlawful pleasure of concu-

piscence tickles you, fight, resist, do not consent ; and the saying is fulfilled, Go not after thy desires.' ²⁶¹ Still further, he says elsewhere, that of two persons who have the same temptation to impurity, it sometimes happens that one consents to it and the other resists ; and why ? because, he says, one wills to observe chastity, the other wills not : ' If both are tempted by the same (mark the word *same*) temptation, and one yields and consents to it, while the other perseveres ; what else is shown, but that one willed to fail, the other willed not to fail in chastity.' ²⁶² Moreover, when he says that it is necessary that we should act upon that which best pleases us, it may be asked, whether he speaks of deliberate or indeliberate pleasure. Now we say, that if he had meant indeliberate pleasure, he would have been obliged in consequence to deny that the will, in order to be truly free, need be free not only from violence, but also from necessity. But there are a thousand places where he teaches the reverse, and says that man, whether in good or in evil, acts without necessity ; therefore when he speaks of the predominant pleasure overcoming, he must necessarily mean the deliberate or consequent pleasure. To quote a few of these numerous passages — ' Our will would be no will at all, if it were not in our own power ; for that is not free to us which we have not in our power.' ²⁶³ In another place, speaking of the passage of St. Matthew, where our Lord talks of good fruit springing from a good tree, and bad fruit from a bad tree (ch. vii. 16-20), he says, ' When, therefore, our Lord says this, do this or do that, he shows that it is in the power of man to do it ; for he that will not keep the law, can keep it if he will.' ²⁶⁴ Calvin objects that Augustine is here speaking of man in the state of innocence ; but Bellarmine well observes, that St. Augustine is here explaining a passage where our Lord is speaking against the Jews, and says of them, " Ye shall know them by their fruits." ²⁶⁵ So that it can never be supposed that St. Augustine meant to apply the remark to Adam. Moreover, he repeats what he had said against the Manichees, when writing against the Pelagians : ' Whenever it is said, ' Do not this and do not that,' and whenever an act of will is required of us to do or not to do something which God

commands or forbids, in such places the will is shown to be sufficiently free.'²⁶⁶ Here Jansenius replies (like a partisan of Calvin as he is), that St. Augustine is speaking of necessity violently imposed on us, not of simple necessity. But here again Jansenius is mistaken; for on this point St. Augustine agreed with the Pelagians, and conceded to them that the will was free both from coercive and from simple necessity: hence in his book against Julian he did not scruple to say, 'Both of us affirm that the will in man is free. But you say that any one is free to do good without God's help; hence you are a Pelagian.'²⁶⁷ When St. Augustine says, 'both of us affirm,' he admitted the same liberty to do or not to do, which the Pelagians maintained, and they certainly maintained it to be exempt from any necessity whatever; so that there is no doubt that he held the will to be free not only from violence, but from any necessity whatever; he only contradicted the Pelagians in this point, that they maintained the will to be free to do good even without grace.

Further, St. Augustine says, that it is difficult to reconcile the liberty of the will with the efficacy of grace: 'This question, wherein we discuss the choice of the will, and the grace of God, is so difficult to determine, that when we defend free will we seem to deny the grace of God: and when we assert the grace of God, we are supposed to destroy free will.'²⁶⁸ If St. Augustine had supposed that the will was not free from simple necessity, but only from violence, it would not have been difficult, but the easiest thing possible, to understand how grace acted; when, therefore, he said that it was difficult to understand, it was because he held that efficacious grace certainly produced its effect in good acts; and, on the other hand, that the will did these acts freely, working without any necessity to prevent it from being able to do, or to wish any acts different from those to which it was moved by grace. For the rest, the holy father held it as certain that man, with the help of ordinary grace, was able to fulfil the commandments, or at any rate to procure by prayer greater help to enable him to fulfil them; otherwise (as he said)

God would not have imposed these commandments on him : ' Nor would He have commanded us to do this, if He had considered it impossible to be done by man.'²⁶⁹

We will quote some more passages of St. Augustine, where he reiterates the doctrine that the will of man is free from any necessity : ' For that would not be sin which was not done by the will ; and therefore punishment would also be unjust, if man had not free will ; that is, if he acted well or ill through necessity.'²⁷⁰ Again, ' Who would not exclaim that it is folly to give commands to a man who is not free to do what is commanded ? and that it is injustice to condemn the man who had no power to fulfil the command ?'²⁷¹ Again, ' If the motion whereby the will turns aside from the unchangeable good is natural and necessary, it can by no means be culpable.' Then, after saying that previous grace is necessary to enable us to do good, he adds, ' But to consent to the call of God, or to dissent from it, is in the power of our own will.'²⁷² Here he plainly teaches that the will can freely obey grace or resist it. Nor does it avail to say with Jansenius that St. Augustine only means, that to consent and dissent is the proper office of the will ; for we can never believe that the holy doctor would have taken such useless pains to prove that consent and dissent belong to the will and not to the intellect, a thing which any blockhead can tell. Especially as St. Augustine's words, just before the last quoted sentence, are as follows : ' No one has it in his power to determine what shall come into his mind, but to consent, &c.' So that it is clear that he is speaking of the free power of the will to consent or dissent from that which comes into the head. In another place he says, ' No one but God can make the tree' (he is speaking of the good trees that produce good fruit, and of the bad trees which produce bad fruit) ; ' but every man's will has power to choose either good or bad. When, therefore, our Lord says, do this or do that, He shows that it is in men's power to choose what to do.'²⁷³ Elsewhere, in explanation of the help *sine quo*, he says, ' Without it the will cannot will ; but still it is left to the free will either to will or not to will, to use the help or not to use it.'²⁷⁴ From all this it is very clearly seen how

far St. Augustine was from the opinion of Jansenius, that the will of man in its action is not free from necessity, much less that it is obliged to follow the preponderating pleasure, which by its impulse invincibly moves and determines it.

Now, let us apply this to the point we had in view, namely, to prove that God gives every one either proximate grace, or the remote grace of prayer, to enable him to observe the precepts ; since otherwise his not observing them could never be imputed to him as a fault. Let us then see what are the two propositions that are exactly opposite to those of Jansenius. His first is, 'Some precepts of God are impossible to the just man who wishes and tries to fulfil them, with his present strength ; nor does God give him grace to make them possible.' Hence the Catholic proposition, contradictory of this, is as follows : 'Not any of the precepts of God is impossible, at least to the just man, who wishes to observe them, and who endeavours to do so ; nor, even with his present strength, is he without the grace (either proximate, or at least remote), whereby he may at any rate obtain greater assistance to enable him to fulfil them. And here we must again observe, that to avoid the condemned error it is not enough to grant the absolute possibility of observing the precept, for the Jansenists themselves admitted this possibility ; but we must also admit the possibility (relatively to the actual carnal delectation which preponderates over the delectation of grace) to fulfil the commandment when it is incumbent on us to do so, or at least to obtain grace to keep it ; since the error of Jansenius consists precisely in denying, not the absolute, but the relative possibility.

Jansenius' third proposition is, that 'in order to merit ill or well in the state of fallen nature, man need not have freedom from necessity, but only freedom from compulsion.' Hence the Catholic proposition is the contradictory, to merit ill or well, even in the state of fallen nature, man, whether just or unjust, requires freedom, not only from compulsion, but also from simple necessity ; since, according to the Catholic doctrine, the voluntary, whenever it is necessary, is not free in such a sense as is sufficient to

merit ill or well in this life ; but to merit ill or well the will must be free from any necessity whatever of being obliged to consent to either of two things determinately.

In sum, F. Fortunato da Brescia (a man universally celebrated by the learned of these days. especially by Mutatori) in his late work, entitled *Confutation of the System of Cornelius Jansenius*, says, that if this system could possibly be true, God's law would be either foolish or unjust ; for, according to it, if the heavenly pleasure predominates, then the will, quite independently of the law, is obliged to follow the precise impulse of the pleasure, and thus the law is useless ; or, if the earthly pleasure predominates, then the law is unjust, for God imposes a commandment which it is physically impossible for man to obey, since the will must necessarily yield to the temptation. And in this way all the threats and admonitions of the Scriptures would be useless, and there would be no human action which could merit reward or punishment, since all the actions of man would be done through necessity. So that whenever any one exhorted us to do well, we might answer with Eusebius against the Fatalists, 'These powers are not mine, O doctor ; for they will do it if the fates will' (*i. e.* if the carnal delight does not preponderate) ; 'that which is fated will necessarily come to pass.' I must necessarily follow the pleasure that prevails. He says, further, that if we admit this system, we must also admit Manicheeism, which supposed two principles, a good and an evil ; and said, that as all the acts of men were derived from one or the other principle, the man was obliged to follow that which prevailed. Nor does it do to say that the necessity in the system of the preponderating pleasure is not derived from a good or evil principle, as the Manichæans held, but depends on the sin of Adam, which is its cause ; for the question is not through what principle the will acts necessarily when it is moved, but whether the will after Adam's fall has remained free from necessity in its actions : and this is what the Jansenists deny, who hold that the will merits well and ill, though it is necessitated to will that to which the preponderating pleasure determines it. But as F. Fortunato well observes, the books of

Arnold, Irénée, Ventrochio, and the other Jansenists, were condemned for this very error of maintaining Jansenius' principle of the invincibility of the pleasure which is superior in degree. And we know that it was for this reason that the theology of Giovenino was prohibited; for though he did not expressly hold the system we are discussing, yet he imprudently spoke too obscurely on the point: 'The physical nature of efficacious grace consists simply in the preponderance of the pleasure which the mind takes in goodness.'²⁵ Still he did not use the phrase 'relatively preponderating,' though he proves his proposition by the often quoted text of St Augustine: 'We must act according to that which pleases us most.' And for this cause his work was so long prohibited, and has at last been allowed, because of the addition of a compendium, entitled *The true doctrine of the Church*, extracted from the theology of Tourneley, who has amply and well confuted the system. F. da Breseia concludes, 'It is clear, then, that the system of Jansenius is favourable to them (Luther and Calvin), and so cannot be maintained by a Catholic without violating his faith. For we cannot preserve our faith and religion while defending a system, on the admission of whose fundamental principles the reception of condemned doctrines necessarily follows.'²⁶ Tourneley meant the same when he said, 'Since the Church condemned the five propositions in the sense of Jansenius, they must be condemned as parts of Jansenius' theory of the superior and relatively preponderating pleasure, which is the foundation of his whole system.'²⁷

Nor will it avail to say, that the system of Jansenius is one thing, which supposes that the pleasure which relatively preponderates is indeliberate, that is, that it comes to us without any assent of the will; but that it is quite a different thing to say that the pleasure, though it relatively preponderates by the superiority of its degree, yet is deliberate; that is, it preponderates not by itself and by its own strength (as the maintainers of this system say), but it preponderates by being reinforced by the power of the consenting will. And hence they say, that though the preponderating pleasure certainly and infallibly overcomes,

yet it does not do so necessarily, as Jansenius maintained. This will not avail, because, as Tourneley well replies, that grace, or that pleasure which is infallibly efficacious, and invincibly determines the will by its preponderating power, cannot but necessitate the will to consent. And he proves it thus, 'That grace necessitates which supposes the will to be destitute of real power to resist it ; but of this nature is grace, which is infallibly efficacious, because of the superiority of the degree of its strength. For grace of this kind supposes that the will has only inferior strength to resist ; but it is a contradiction to say that superior strength, acting as such, can be overcome by inferior ; otherwise it would be necessary that the inferior strength should act beyond the degree of its power of acting.' Nor does it avail to reply, that though the power of grace relatively preponderating is superior to that of the concupiscence taken by itself, it is not superior to that of the concupiscence joined with that of the will, 'because,' as Tourneley says, 'such a power of the will could only be admitted with respect to evil which a man can do by himself, as when he overcomes one vice by another, or at any rate with respect to good of the natural order ; but not with respect to supernatural good, such as the conquest of a strong concupiscence, which cannot be effected without God's grace. Hence the fathers of Diospolis required every Pelagian, amongst other things, 'to confess, that when we fight against temptations and unlawful concupiscence, the victory comes not from our own will, but from the help of God.' And the reason is, as St. Thomas teaches, that no active principle can produce an effect exceeding the sphere of its activity ; so that no natural principle or cause can produce a supernatural effect : 'No act exceeds the proportion of its active principle ; and hence we see that in natural things nothing can by its own operation produce an effect which exceeds the power of its activity, but can only by its own operation produce an effect proportionate to its power.' So that the natural power of the human will, although united to the power of grace, cannot, when the latter is inferior to the power of the concupiscence, contribute to produce a supernatural effect, such as the

conquest of a violent concupiscence that preponderates over grace. And, in fact, the Jansenists say, we are contented if you grant to us that the delectation certainly overcomes by reason of its superior power. See how one of them, the Abbot de Bourzéis speaks : ‘ It is sufficient for us if this single truth be granted, that as often as we consent to the grace of God, it always arises from the right love which God inspires, being superior in strength to the perverse love ; and in consequence of this superiority always most certainly overcoming it.’²⁷⁸ Hence Tournéley, speaking of the two systems, of pleasure absolutely preponderating, and of pleasure relatively preponderating, concludes, ‘ We have known orthodox theologians who test efficacious grace by its pleasure being absolutely and simply preponderating over all other pleasures ; and who call that sufficient grace which has just power enough to overcome the lust actually opposed to it. But we have only met with Jansenists who maintain that no grace can overcome unless it is relatively preponderating in degree, and who admit no other sufficient grace than one which is inferior in strength to the superior concupiscence which opposes it.’²⁷⁹ So that, to conclude, we do not intend now to blame the opinion that the will, even when it follows the greater delectation, yet always acts freely, that is, without necessity, and with true power (not merely nominal or hypothetical power) to act in a contrary way ; but we only reject the opinion of those who say, that when one of the two pleasures, the carnal or the heavenly, preponderates by being greater in degree than the other, then man has no more power to resist and to overcome it, because the greater force always overcomes the less.

Nevertheless, I cannot in this place neglect to mention the difficulty that I find in this system of the preponderating delectation. Its defenders say, as also F. John Laurence Berti,²⁸⁰ that the efficacy of grace, as they maintain it, does not differ in substance from the efficacy as taught by the Thomists, though founded on different principles ; for the Thomists make the efficacy of grace consist in a physical predetermination, but the Jansenists in the preponderating pleasure. That which is done by physical pre-

motion according to the Thomists, the same is done by victorious delectation according to the Augustinians; namely, the liberty of the will is moved to give consent *in actu secundo*. Further, both opinions teach that man still has the power, *in actu primo*, to act in opposite directions; so that the will always acts freely and without necessity.*

But I observe that, as the principles and the reasons of these two opinions are different, so also are their consequences. According to the Thomists, the reason of the efficacy of grace is, because the created will is in a state of passive potentiality, able to receive the motions of grace; so that to come to actual operation it must be moved by God, as the first Agent and first Free Cause, who, by His predetermination, adapts and determines the potentiality (of the will) into actuality. This only relates to the act; but as for the power or capability, the Thomists say that man has the grace of potentiality wholly complete, and in proximate preparation, so as to be able to act virtuously. Thus F. Gonet, 'The grace which gives the power gives the full complement, and all the strength or sufficiency which is requisite, so far as the *actus primus* is concerned.'^{2s1} So, also, Cardinal Gotti: 'Sufficient grace gives proximate power, and complete power within the limits of potentiality.'^{2s2} And thus all other Thomists in general; and if any of them apparently speaks otherwise, it is only of the *actus secundus*, not *primus*.

On the other hand, the reason of the principle of those who maintain the opinion of the pleasure superior in degree, is because (as they say) whereas at first, in the state of innocence, man only required 'sufficient grace' to do well, since his will, being then sound and in perfect balance, could easily act with only sufficient grace, without needing efficacious grace,—now, on the other hand, since the fall of Adam, the will, being injured and inclined to evil, has need of 'efficacious grace,' which, by means of the victorious pleasure, adapts it for acting virtuously. But (I say) according to this reason for the system, granting that the will of man has become so weak that, in its pre-

* See App.

sent state, it cannot act without efficacious grace, it is impossible to say that man still has, by virtue of sufficient grace, not even in the *actus primus*, nor either in the *sensus compositus*, nor *sensus divisus*, the complete and proximately prepared power to observe the commandments, or to be able to do any good work, even though it be mediate, by means of which he can place himself in a position to obtain greater help to enable him to fulfil the law.

I know that the supporters of this opinion have no objection to grant this, and to say that, in our present state, sufficient grace does not give complete and prepared power. 'Sufficient grace,' says F. Macedo, one of this school, 'does not give power proximately complete and prepared.'²⁸³ And elsewhere, speaking of the grace of Adam innocent, and of Adam fallen, he says, 'The first supposed (a power) prepared and free; the second a power crippled, hindered, and enslaved.'²⁸⁴

So, supposing that grace, when inferior to the concupiscence, does not give complete and prepared power to observe the commandments, it can, in truth, be no longer called sufficient. So that, in fact, F. Berti, who defends such a system of the relatively victorious delectation, finds no difficulty in further granting that such inferior grace ought properly to be called inefficacious, and not sufficient. So that on this system, they who do not receive from God grace that is efficacious, by means of the delectation relatively victorious over that of the concupiscence, have not even grace sufficient to enable them to fulfil the Commandments. F. Berti thus writes in defence of his opinion: first, he states the three objections of his opponents, which are as follows: 'There are three things which savour of the Jansenist dogma, and are the fountain and source of the five condemned propositions; to which the new Jansenists, the chief of whom are two (doubtless pretended) Augustinians, make no objection' (These two are F. Bellelli and F. Berti, against whom the Archbishop of Vienne wrote). 'The first of these three things is, that they do not make efficacious grace consist simply in a victorious delectation, but in a delectation relatively preponderating, &c. The second is, that they deny the existence of a power *proxi*

metely prepared in the case of a delectation of a lower grade; requiring for this, as regards the power and the *actus primus*, a stronger delectation; and therefore inefficacious grace (or the assistance *sine quo*, which they preach about) is not really sufficient grace, either in the Molinist sense, or the Thomist sense; since sufficient grace, by the common consent of Catholics, confers power proximately prepared. The third thing that follows from this is, that they deny the existence of such a thing as sufficient grace; the very name of which they fraudulently abstain from using; and call it rather inefficacious than insufficient.' Such are the objections; now for F. Berti's answer: 'I most firmly and unhesitatingly declare, that the three doctrines just cited are no ways erroneous, nor principles of the five condemned propositions; but that some people, moved indeed by a laudable zeal for refuting Jansenius, but nevertheless carried away by the prejudice of their private judgment, have made no distinction between what is Catholic, and what is erroneous and condemned; and that, from these people's lucubrations, some anonymous sciolist' (the Archbishop of Vienne to wit), 'and some other men of scanty learning and fat wits, have taken occasion to calumniate the unshaken doctrines of Augustine (which, whether they admit it or not, are the same as ours) as monstrous heresies.'

Now I confess myself also to be precisely one of these scantily-learned and gross-minded men; for I cannot understand how the propositions of F. Berti hold together; since in their consequences they appear clearly repugnant to one another. If he had said that to observe the Divine law we have need of efficacious grace, but that sufficient grace, which is given to all, gives the proximate power to enable us to pray, and by prayer to obtain the greater assistance necessary for the actual observance of the Commandments, we should quite agree; for this is our opinion, which we shall set forth and prove in the next chapter. But we cannot agree; because, while speaking of prayer, he says well that every one of the faithful, by means of this sufficient grace, if he puts no impediment in the way, can pray, and by prayer obtain the immediate assistance to

enable him actually to fulfil the Commandments. 'To each of the faithful' (these are his words), 'unless he freely puts an obstacle in the way, the grace of prayer is given, by which he may obtain the aid immediately sufficient to fulfil the Commandments.'²⁸⁵ And further, he says in another place, that the said sufficient grace, common to all the faithful, although only remotely sufficient for the observance of the precepts, is, nevertheless, proximately sufficient for prayer, by which efficacious grace is then obtained: 'In him who has the little will (that is the will which is furnished by the sufficient grace) there is a power proximately sufficient for prayer, and remotely sufficient for the observance of the Commandments, which he will be able proximately to fulfil, when by prayer he has obtained a strong will' (which strong will is furnished by efficacious grace).²⁸⁶ He says then, and says wisely, that for the observance of the Commandments, it cannot be said that sufficient grace gives to all the proximate power actually to fulfil them; for (as he well observes in the place just cited, § 4), the proximate power to observe the precepts, is that which needs nothing further to enable it to act: hence he writes in the same section (4), near the beginning, that the complete and prepared power can only be had from efficacious grace: 'Efficacious grace alone gives the complete and ready power.' Hence he adds that, in order that the sufficient grace may be said to be proximately sufficient for actual operation, 'it is requisite that it should not need any farther means in order to act.' So that, according to the reasoning of F. Berti, though the sufficient grace does not supply all the faithful with proximate power to keep the Commandments, yet it supplies all with power proximately sufficient to pray. Therefore each of the faithful, by the aid of 'sufficient grace' alone, can actually pray, without the need of any further assistance, *i. e.* of efficacious grace.

But then I do not know how this agrees with what he says in another place: 'No one without grace, efficacious in itself, has the power of praying united with the act.'²⁸⁷ Therefore, according to this second proposition, the 'sufficient grace' does not give really, but only in name, the power proximately sufficient for prayer. It only gives the

power remotely sufficient, if there is need of efficacious grace to make the power of praying issue in act. Either, therefore, for actual prayer, 'efficacious grace' is requisite, and then it cannot be said that the sufficient grace gives the power proximately sufficient; or else 'sufficient grace' gives the power proximately sufficient for actual prayer; and then there is no need of the efficacious grace of the preponderating pleasure, which he seeks to establish. But St. Augustine also, says F. Berti, requires an overpowering pleasure to enable us to pray: 'Augustine²⁸⁸ teaches, that for prayer a certain knowledge is requisite, and an overpowering pleasure.' I have examined the passage referred to, which is as follows: 'Let us understand, if we can, that the good Lord God sometimes does not give even to His saints either the certain knowledge of some good work, or an overpowering delight in it, in order that they may understand that the light wherewith their darkness is enlightened, comes not from themselves but from Him, and so also the sweetness by which their land yields its fruit.' St. Augustine does not say that an overpowering delight is requisite for prayer; he only says that sometimes God does not give even to His saints either the certain knowledge or the overpowering delight of some just work, in order that they may know that from Him, and not from themselves, they have the light to illumine them, and the sweetness to make them bear fruit.

Therefore St. Augustine does not here primarily speak of the sufficient grace by which a man can work, but does not always work; nor does he say that man with only sufficient grace, and without efficacious grace, cannot actually pray; but he speaks only of efficacious grace, which, by means of an overpowering delight, infallibly causes him to do well. Secondly, he does not speak here of prayer, but of just works; which properly means the observance of the precepts or of the counsels; since prayer, though it is a good work, of its own nature is not a work, but the means of obtaining the aid necessary to execute good works.

We also hold, as we said before, that efficacious grace is necessary for the observance of the Commandments; but we say that for actual prayer, whereby we may obtain effi-

efficacious grace, the sufficient grace which God gives to all the faithful is enough. And thus we do no violence to the truth that God's commandments are not impossible to any one; since every man, by means of the sufficient grace only, can perform such an easy thing as prayer; and by means of prayer he will obtain the assistance of gratuitous efficacious grace, which is necessary for the actual performance of difficult things—such as the observance of the Commandments; thus says Cardinal Noris, whose words I will quote in the next chapter, and before him St. Augustine: 'By the fact that we most firmly believe that God does not command impossibilities, we are admonished in easy matters what to do, and in difficult matters what to ask for.'²⁸⁹ Otherwise, if sufficient grace were not enough for actual prayer, and the addition of efficacious grace were always necessary, and if this were denied to any man—as, in fact, efficacious grace is denied to many—I cannot see how the commandments of God could be said to be possible to such a person, and how God could demand of him the observance of His law (at the time when He denies him even the efficacious grace to enable him actually to pray), and how with justice He could condemn him to hell for not observing it. This is precisely that which made Jansenius say, that some precepts were impossible even from the first; because he erroneously said that some men want the grace to make the precepts possible to them. But it is not so; because God gives to all men (we are not here considering the case of infidels and obstinate sinners,) the proximate grace to enable them actually to pray, as we shall prove in the next chapter. And so no one will be able to make the excuse that the observance of the precepts was impossible to him; for though he had not efficacious grace for their actual observance, he had, nevertheless, grace proximately sufficient for actual prayer, by means of which he would have obtained from God efficacious grace, according to His promise of hearing whoever prays to Him; and with this he certainly might have observed the precepts. And the Council of Trent has expressly declared this against Luther, who asserted that the observance of God's law was impossible even to the faithful. 'God,' it says,

‘does not command impossibilities; but by commanding, He admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do; and by His help He enables you to do it.’

CHAPTER IV.

God gives all men the grace to pray if they choose, as the “sufficient grace” which is common to all men is by itself enough for prayer.

ASSUMING, then, that God wills all men to be saved, and that, as far as He is concerned, He gives to all the graces necessary for their salvation, we must say that all men have given to them the grace to enable them actually to pray (without needing a further grace); and by prayer to obtain all further aid necessary for the observation of the commandments and for salvation. But it must be noticed, that when we say, ‘without needing a further grace,’ we do not mean that the common grace gives prayer without the aid of assisting grace, since, in order to exercise any act of piety, besides the exciting grace, there is doubtless required the assisting or co-operating grace; but we mean that the common grace gives every man the power of actual prayer, without a further preventing grace, which, physically or morally, determines the will of man to exercise the act of prayer. We will first mention the names of the famous theologians who teach this opinion as certain, and then we will prove it by authorities and arguments. It is held by Isambert,²⁹⁰ Cardinal du Perron,²⁹¹ Alphonsus le Moine,²⁹² and others whom we shall presently quote, and at greater length as a set proposition by Honoratus Tournelle.²⁹³ All these authors prove that every man, by means of the ordinary sufficient grace alone, can actually pray, without need of further aid; and by prayer can obtain all the graces requisite for the performance of the most difficult things. It was also held by Cardinal Noris, who proves the proposition, that man, when the commandment urges (*urgendo il precetto*), can pray if he will; and he proves it thus: ‘It is clear that the power to pray

should be proximate in the just man or the faithful ; for if the faithful has only a remote power for a simple act of prayer (I am not here speaking of fervid prayer), he will not have another proximate power to obtain the grace of prayer, otherwise the series would be infinite.'²⁹⁴ Assuming that, in order to keep the commandments and to be saved, prayer is necessary, as we proved in the beginning, when we spoke of the necessity of prayer. this learned author says well that every one has the proximate power of prayer, in order that by prayer he may obtain the proximate power to do good ; and therefore all can pray with only the ordinary grace, without other assistance. Otherwise, if in order to obtain the proximate power for the act of prayer we required another power, we should still want another power of grace to obtain this power, and so on *ad infinitum* ; and it would no longer be in the power of man to co-operate in his salvation.

The same author in another place maintains this doctrine more clearly: 'Even in the state of fallen nature the assistance *sine quo* (*i. e.* the sufficient grace which is common to all) is given, though Jansenius denies it ; and this assistance produces in us weak acts, namely, prayer not very fervid, for fulfilling the commandments ; but for the actual observation of these, the assistance *sine quo* is only a remote help, by which we can, however, obtain by prayer the assistance *quo*, or efficacious grace, by which the commandments are fulfilled.'²⁹⁵ So that Cardinal Noris held it as certain, that in the present state all men have the assistance *sine quo*, *i. e.* ordinary grace, which, without need of further assistance, produces prayer, by which we can then obtain efficacious grace to enable us to observe the law. And hence we can easily understand the axiom universally received in the schools: 'To him who does what in him lies, God does not refuse His grace.' That is, to the man who prays, and thus makes good use of the sufficient grace which enables him to do such an easy thing as prayer, God does not refuse the efficacious grace to enable him to execute difficult things.

Thus, also, Louis Thomassin, who expresses astonishment at those who say that 'sufficient assistance' is not

enough to do any actual good work, nor to avoid any sin : 'For if,' he says, 'this assistance is truly assistance, and gives proximate power, how is it that, out of the innumerable quantity of men who are thus assisted, none keep the commandments? Or how is it truly sufficient, if, besides it, efficacious grace is necessary? That man has not a sufficient power who wants a necessary assistance which is not in his own power.'²⁹⁶ He means that 'sufficient grace,' to be really sufficient, ought to give a man the proximate and ready power to execute a good act; but since, in order to perform such an act, another grace—namely efficacious grace—is wanted, unless a man has (at least mediately) this efficacious grace which is necessary for salvation, how can it be said that the 'sufficient grace' gives this proximate and ready power? Since, says St. Thomas, 'God does not neglect to do that which is necessary to salvation.'²⁹⁷ On the one hand, it is true that God is not bound to give us His grace, because what is *gratis* is not of obligation; but, on the other hand, supposing that He gives us commandments, He is obliged to give us the assistance necessary for observing them; and as God obliges us actually to observe every precept whenever it applies, so ought He also actually to supply us (at least mediately or remotely) with the assistance necessary for the observation of the precept, without the necessity of a further grace, which is not common to all. Hence Thomassin concludes, that in order to reconcile the proposition that 'sufficient grace' is enough for a man's salvation with the statement that efficacious grace is requisite to observe the whole law, it is necessary to say that sufficient grace is enough to pray, and to perform similar easy acts, and that by means of these we then obtain efficacious grace to fulfil the difficult acts. And this is without doubt in conformity with the doctrine of St. Augustine, who teaches: 'By the very fact that God is most firmly believed not to command impossibilities, we are admonished both what to do in easy things, and in difficult things what to ask for.'²⁹⁸ On this passage Cardinal Noris observes, 'Therefore we are able to do easy or less perfect works without asking God for further help; for which, however, we must pray

in more difficult works.' Thomassin also brings forward the authority of St. Bonaventure, Scotus, and others, on this subject, and says, 'All these considered the sufficient grace to be truly sufficient, whether the will consents to it or not.' And this he demonstrates in four parts of his book, adducing the authorities of the schoolmen for a long series of years, beginning from the year 1100.

Habert, Bishop of Vabres and Doctor of the Sorbonne, who was the first to write against Jansenius, says: 'We think, first, that 'sufficient grace' has only a contingent or mediate connection with the actual effect of the complete consent. . . . We think, further, that 'sufficient grace' is a grace that disposes for efficacious grace, since from a good use of it God afterwards grants to the created will the grace that performs the complete effect.'²⁹⁹ He had said before, that 'All Catholic doctors, of all schools, have professed, and do profess, that a real inward grace is given, which is capable of persuading the will to consent to good, though, on account of the free resistance of the will, it sometimes does not persuade it thus to consent ;'³⁰⁰ and for this doctrine he quotes Gamaches, Duval, Isambert, Perez, Le Moyne, and others. Then he goes on: 'The assistance, therefore, of sufficient grace, disposes us for the reception of efficacious grace ; and is in some sort efficacious, namely, of an incomplete effect, obtained first remote'y, then more nearly, and at last proximately—such as is an act of faith, hope, love, and, mixed with these, one of prayer. Hence the famous Alphonsus le Moyne taught that this sufficient grace was the grace of asking, or of prayer, of which St. Augustine so often speaks.'³⁰¹ So that, according to Habert, the difference between efficacious and sufficient grace is, that the former produces its effect completely, while the latter produces it either contingently (*i. e.* sometimes, but not always) or mediately (*i. e.* by means of prayer). Moreover, he says that sufficient grace, according to the good use we make of it, prepares us to obtain efficacious grace ; hence he calls sufficient grace 'in some sort efficacious' (*secundum quid*), because of its effect commenced but not completed. Lastly, he says that sufficient grace is the

grace of prayer, of which it is in our power to avail ourselves, as St. Augustine teaches. So that a man has no excuse if he does not do that which he already has sufficient grace to enable him to perform; by which grace, without further assistance, he may either act, or at least obtain more help to enable him to act. And Habert asserts, that this was the common doctrine of the Sorbonne.

Charles du-Plessis d'Argentre, another theologian of the Sorbonne, quotes more than a thousand theologians who teach directly, that with sufficient grace easy works are accomplished; and that a man who makes use of it obtains thereby a more abundant assistance for his thorough conversion. And precisely in this sense, as we said before, he says the celebrated axiom of the schools is to be understood: 'To those who do what is in their power' (that is, by means of sufficient grace) 'God does not deny grace;' that is, more abundant and efficacious grace.³⁰²

The learned Dionysius Petavius proves at great length that man works with simple sufficient grace; and he even asserts that it would be monstrous to say otherwise; and that this is the doctrine not only of theologians but also of the Church. Hence he says, that the grace of observing the precepts follows prayer; and that the gift of prayer is given by God at the time when He imposes the precept: 'This gift, by which God grants us power to do justly, follows the act of prayer; and this act is given contemporaneously with the law.'³⁰³ So that as the law is imposed upon all, so the gift of prayer is given to all.

The author of the *Theology for the use of the Seminary of Peterkau* says, that with sufficient grace alone, 'a man can do well, and sometimes does so;' so that 'there is nothing to hinder that of two persons furnished with the same assistance, one should very often perform the mere acts (which precede full conversion), the other not.'³⁰⁴ And this, he says, is in conformity with the doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and of his first disciples, especially of Father Bartholomew Medina, who says, 'Sometimes a man is converted only with sufficient grace.'³⁰⁵ And I find that also Father Louis of Granada asserts this to

be the common doctrine of theologians: 'Theologians reckon two kinds of assistance, one sufficient, the other more than sufficient; by the former of which men are sometimes converted, sometimes refuse to be converted.'³⁰⁶ And shortly afterwards: 'And theologians define how universally this assistance is open to men.' Hence Petrocorensis says: 'So man can do some acts of piety, such as to pray to God with humility with the sufficient grace only, and sometimes actually does them; and so prepares himself for further graces.' This, he says, is the order of God's providence with regard to graces, 'that the succeeding should follow the good use of the former.' And he concludes that thorough conversion and final perseverance 'are infallibly obtained by prayer, for which the sufficient grace which is given to every one abundantly suffices.'

The same is held by Cardinal d'Aguirre, who in all things follows St. Augustine.³⁰⁷ Father Antonio Boucat, of the order of St. Francis of Paula, defends the position that every one is *now* able, without new assistance, to obtain by prayer the grace of conversion.³⁰⁸ And after quoting Gamaches, Duval, Habert, Le Moyne, he cites in favour of this opinion Peter of Tarantasia, Bishop of Tulle, Godert de Fonté, and Henry of Ghent, doctors of the Sorbonne, together with the Regius Professor Lygné, who, in his tract *De Gratia*, demonstrates that 'sufficient grace' not only gives prayer, as Le Moyne and Professor Elias said, but also gives the power to do some works that are not difficult. Gaudenzio Bontempi in like manner demonstrated that sufficient grace obtains efficacious grace by means of prayer, which is given to all who will avail themselves of it.³⁰⁹ Cardinal Robert Pullo asserts two kinds of grace, one always victorious, the other one by which man sometimes works, sometimes does not: 'The other by the assistance of which man can do which he chooses of these two things, either to co-operate with grace, or to despise it, and to continue sinning.'³¹⁰ Father Fortunato da Brescia is also of the same opinion, and holds that all men have the mediate grace of prayer to enable them to observe the precepts; and has no doubt that St. Augustine held the same.³¹¹

Richard of St. Victor similarly teaches, that there is a sufficient grace which a man sometimes consents to, sometimes resists.³¹² Dominic Soto asks, 'Why of two persons, whom God is most ready and desirous to convert, one is drawn by grace, and not the other?' And he answers: 'No other reason can be given, except that one consents and co-operates, while the other does not co-operate.'³¹³ Matthias Felicio, who wrote against Calvin, thus defines ordinary or sufficient grace: 'It is a divine motion, or instinct, which moves a man to good, and is denied to none. Men behave differently to this instinct; for some acquiesce in it, and are disposed *de congruo* for habitual grace; for we believe that God will not desert those who do what they can. Others, on the contrary, oppose it.'³¹⁴ Andreas Vega likewise says: 'These helps, which are given to all men, are by most called inefficacious, because they do not always produce their effect, but are sometimes frustrated by sinners.'³¹⁵ Therefore, sufficient grace sometimes produces its effect, and sometimes does not.

Cardinal Gotti in one place of his *Theology* apparently agrees with us; for where he discusses the difficulty, how a man can persevere if he will, when it is not in his power to have the special assistance which is requisite for perseverance, he answers, that although this special assistance is not in a man's power, 'yet it is said to be in a man's power, because he can by the grace of God ask for it and obtain it; and in this way it may be said to be in a man's power to have the assistance necessary for perseverance, because it can be obtained by prayers.'³¹⁶ So, to verify the proposition that it is in a man's power to persevere, it is necessary to grant both that he can, without needing any further grace, obtain by prayer the assistance requisite for perseverance, and also, that with only the sufficient grace common to all, without need of any special grace, he can actually pray, and by prayer obtain perseverance; otherwise it could not be said that every man had the grace necessary for perseverance, at least remotely or mediately, by means of prayer. But if Cardinal Gotti did not mean this, at any rate St. Francis of Sales did, when he said that the grace of

actual prayer is given to every one who will avail himself of it, and thence deduced that perseverance is in the power of every body. The saint says this clearly in his *Theotimus*, where, after proving that constant prayer is necessary to obtain from God the gift of final perseverance, he adds: ‘Now, since the gift of prayer is freely promised to all those who will consent to the heavenly inspirations, consequently, it is in our power to persevere.’³¹⁷ Cardinal Bellarmine teaches the same thing: ‘An assistance, then and there, sufficient for salvation, is given mediately or immediately to all men. . . . We say mediately or immediately, because to those who have the use of reason we believe that holy inspirations are given by God, and that by this they have immediately the exciting grace; by which, if they will acquiesce in it, they can be disposed to be justified, and at last to obtain salvation.’³¹⁸

Let us now proceed to examine the proofs of this opinion. It is proved, first by the authority of the Apostle, who assures us that God is faithful, and will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength, since he always gives us assistance (whether immediate or mediate, by means of prayer) to resist the assaults of our enemies: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will make with the temptation issue, that ye may be able to bear it.” Jansenius says, that this text refers only to the predestinate, but this comment of his is completely unfounded; for St. Paul is writing to all the faithful of Corinth, all of whom he certainly did not consider to be predestinate. So that St. Thomas has good reason for understanding it generally of all men, and for saying that God would not be faithful if He did not grant us (so far as in Him lies) those graces by means of which we can obtain salvation: ‘But He would not appear to be faithful were he to refuse us (so far as He is concerned) those things which are requisite to enable us to come to Him.’³¹⁹ It is proved, moreover, by all those texts in which God exhorts us to convert ourselves, and to have recourse to Him to ask Him for the graces necessary for our salvation, and promises to hear us when we have recourse to Him. “Wisdom preacheth aloud, . . . saying, O chil-

dren, how long will ye love childishness, and fools covet those things which are hurtful to themselves, &c. ? Turn ye at My reproof : behold, I will utter My Spirit to you. Because I called, and you refused, &c. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock at you" (Prov. i. 23, 25). This exhortation, "Turn ye," would be simple mockery, says Bellarmine, if God did not give to sinners at least the mediate grace of prayer for their conversion.³²⁰ Besides, we find in the passage a mention of the internal grace by which God calls sinners, and gives them actual assistance for conversion, if they will accept it, in the words, "Behold, I will bring forth My Spirit to you." "Come to Me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). "Come, and accuse me, saith the Lord ; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow" (Is. i. 18). "Ask, and it shall be given you" (St. Matt. vii. 7). And so in hundreds of other texts already quoted. Now if God did not give every one grace actually to have recourse to Him, and actually to pray to Him, all these invitations and exhortations, "Come all, and I will refresh you ; seek, and it shall be given you," would be vain.

Secondly, it is clearly proved by the passage of the Council of Trent so often quoted.³²¹ I beg the reader to give his best attention to this proof ; which, if I am not mistaken, is perfectly decisive. There were innovators who said that as man was deprived of free-will by the sin of Adam, the will of man at present does nothing in good actions, but is induced to receive them passively from God, without producing them itself ; and hence they inferred that the observance of the commandments was impossible to those who are not efficaciously moved and predetermined by grace to avoid evil and to do good. Against this error the Council pronounced sentence in words borrowed from St. Augustine : ' God does not command impossible things ; but by commanding, admonishes you both to do what you can, and to pray for what you cannot do ; and He helps you, so that you may be able.'³²² The Council, then, in order to prove against the heretics that God's commandments are not impossible to any one, has declared that all men have

assistance to enable them to do good, or at least have the grace of prayer, whereby to obtain greater assistance. The meaning of this is, that every man can by means of the common grace do easy things (such as pray) without need of further extraordinary grace; and can by prayer obtain strength to do difficult things, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, already quoted: ‘By the very fact that we most firmly believe that the good and just God could not have commanded impossible things, we are admonished in easy matters what to do, and in difficult matters what to pray for.’³²³ So that, according to the Council, the Divine precepts are possible to all men, at least by means of prayer, by which greater help may be obtained to enable us to observe them. If, therefore, God has imposed His commands on all men, and has rendered their observance possible to all, at least mediately by means of prayer, we must necessarily conclude that all men have the grace to enable them to pray; otherwise, the commandments would not be possible to him who was without this grace. And as God grants to prayer actual grace to do good, and thereby renders all His commandments possible; so also He gives all actual grace to pray; otherwise, if there were any man who had not actual grace to pray to Him, the commandments would be impossible, as he could not even by means of prayer obtain the assistance necessary for their observance.

This being settled, it is of no use to say that the words, ‘God admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do,’ are only to be understood of possible, not of actual prayer; because, we reply, if the common and ordinary grace gave only possible and not actual prayer, the Council would not have said, ‘He admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do;’ but, ‘He admonishes you to do, and that you can pray.’ Moreover, if the Council had not intended to declare that every one can observe the precepts, or can pray to obtain grace to observe them, and had not meant to speak of actual grace, it would not have said ‘He admonishes,’ because this word properly refers to actual operation. and imports not the instruction of the mind, but **the**

movement of the will to do that good which it can actually do. When, therefore, it said, 'He admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do,' it most clearly expressed, not only possible operation and possible prayer, but actual operation and actual prayer; for if man had need of another extraordinary grace, which as yet he has not, in order actually to work or to pray, how could God admonish him to do or to ask that which he cannot actually either do or ask without efficacious grace? Father Fortunato Brescia speaks wisely on this point: If the actual grace of prayer were not given to all, but if for prayer we had need of efficacious grace, which is not common to all, prayer would be impossible to the great number who are without this efficacious grace; so that it could not be said with propriety that 'God admonishes you to ask for that which you cannot do,' because He would then admonish us to do a thing requiring a grace which we did not possess. So that God's admonition to work and to pray must be understood of actual operation and prayer, without need of a further extraordinary grace. And this is exactly what St. Augustine means: 'Hence we are admonished in easy things what to do, and in difficult things what to pray for;' because he supposes that though all have not grace to enable them to do difficult things, all have at least grace to pray, prayer being an easy thing for every body, as he also propounds in the words afterwards adopted by the Council of Trent, 'God admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do.' To recapitulate the argument. The Council says that God does not impose impossible commands, because He either gives assistance to observe them, or gives the grace of prayer to obtain this assistance, which He always grants when it is prayed for. Now if it could ever be true that God does not give all men grace, at least the mediate grace of prayer, actually to observe all His precepts, Jansenius' proposition would be true, that even the just man is without grace to enable him actually to observe some of the commandments.

I do not know how else the text of the Council of Trent can be understood and explained, unless the 'suf-

sufficient grace' gave to all men the power of actually praying, without the 'efficacious grace' which our opponents suppose to be necessary for the actual performance of any pious work. And supposing this necessity of a further grace for actual prayer, I cannot understand how this other text of the same Council can be true, 'God does not leave those who have been once justified without grace, unless they first leave Him.' If, I say, the ordinary sufficient grace was not enough for actual prayer; but if for this purpose efficacious grace, which is not common to all men, were required, it would be true, that when the just man was tempted to commit his first mortal sin, and God did not give him efficacious grace at least to enable him to pray, and so to obtain strength to resist, then his succumbing to temptation might rather be said to result from the just man being abandoned by God, before he had abandoned God, and from his being left without the efficacious grace necessary to enable him to resist.

Our opponents object to us a passage of St. Augustine where he appears to maintain that the grace of prayer is not granted to all men: 'Is not our prayer itself at times so tepid, or rather so cold, and almost null—so null, indeed, that we do not notice its nullity with any sorrow; for if this coldness is against our will, it does not prejudice our prayer?'³²⁴ But Cardinal Sfondrati well replies, 'It is one thing to say that sinners do not pray, another to say that they have not grace to enable them to pray.'³²⁵ St. Augustine does not say that any persons are without grace to pray as they ought, but only that at times our prayer is so cold as to be almost null, not for want of God's assistance to enable us to pray better, but simply through our fault, which renders our prayer null. Tourneley answers in the same way, where he says of the first condemned proposition of Jansenius: 'The just do not always pray as they ought. It is their own fault that they do not pray so, since they have by grace sufficient strength to pray. St. Augustine says that our prayer is sometimes cold and almost null; but he does not say that we have not grace to enable us to pray more fervently.' Moreover, Cardinal Noris observes on this same passage, that by means of

tepid prayer we can at any rate obtain grace to pray more fervently, and then by this we obtain efficacious grace to keep the commandments: 'I conclude that even tepid prayer is made with the assistance *sine quo non*, and by the ordinary help of God, since they are weak acts, &c. And yet by tepid prayer we obtain the spirit of more fervent prayer, which is given to us by the assistance *quo*.'³²⁶ And he confirms this by the authority of St. Augustine, who writes thus on Ps. xvii.: 'I have directed my prayers unto thee with a free and strong intention; for thou didst hear me when I prayed more weakly, and didst grant me strength for this.'

Nor can a valid objection be drawn from St. Augustine's observation on the text of St. Paul: "The Spirit besecches for us with groans not to be uttered," that it is the Holy Spirit who makes us intercede, and inspires us with the disposition to intercede.³²⁷ Since the saint here simply says against the Pelagians, that no one can pray without grace. And thus he himself explains it in his commentary on Ps. lii., where he says, 'What thou doest by His gift, He is said to do; because without Him thou couldest not do it.'

In the third place, our opinion is proved by the sayings of the holy fathers. St. Basil says: 'When, however, any one is allowed to fall into temptation, it happens that he may be able to endure it, and to ask in prayer that the will of God may be done.'³²⁸ The saint then says, that when God permits a man to be tempted, He does it in order that the man may resist by asking for God's will, *i. e.* the grace to overcome. He therefore supposes, that when a man has not sufficient assistance to overcome the temptation, he at least has the actual and common grace of prayer, by which he may obtain whatever further grace he needs. St. John Chrysostom says, 'He gave a law which might make their wounds manifest, in order that they might desire a physician.'³²⁹ And again: 'Nor can any one be excused who, by ceasing to pray, has voluntarily abstained from overcoming his adversary.'³³⁰ If such a man had not the grace necessary for actual prayer, whereby he might obtain

grace to resist, he might excuse himself when he is overcome. So also St. Bernard: 'Who are we, or what is our strength? This is what God wanted, that we, seeing our weakness, and that we have no other help, should, with all humility, have recourse to His mercy.'³³¹ God, then, has imposed on us a law impossible to our own strength, in order that we should go to Him, and by prayer obtain strength to observe it; but if any one were without the grace of actual prayer, to him the law would be utterly impossible. 'Many persons,' says the same St. Bernard, 'complain that they are deserted by grace; but grace could much more justly complain of being deserted by them.' God has much more reason to complain of us for not corresponding to the grace He gives us, than we have to complain of not having grace to correspond to.

But no father is more clear on this point than St. Augustine in several places. In one he says: 'The Pelagians think themselves very knowing when they say, God would not command that which He knows man could not do. Who is ignorant of this? But He does command some things that we cannot do, in order that we might know what we ought to ask Him for.' Again, 'It is not reckoned your fault, if you are ignorant without wishing to be so; but only if you neglect to inquire into that of which you are ignorant; nor that you do not cure your wounded members, but that you despise Him who is willing to heal you. These are your own sins; for no man is deprived of the knowledge of how to seek with advantage.'³³² So that, according to St. Augustine, no one is deprived of the grace of prayer, whereby he may obtain help for his conversion; otherwise, if this grace were wanting, it could not be his fault if he were not converted. Again: 'What else, then, is shown us, but that it is He who gives us power both to ask, and to seek, and to knock, who commands us to do these things?'³³³ Again: 'Once for all receive this and understand it. Art thou not yet drawn? Pray that thou mayest be drawn.'³³⁴ Again: 'That the soul then knows not what she ought to do, comes from this, that she has not yet received it; but she will receive this

also, if she has made a good use of what she has received ; and she has received power to seek piously and diligently. if she will.'³³⁵

Mark the words, 'She has received power to seek diligently and piously;' every one, then, has the grace necessary for prayer ; and if he makes a good use of this, he will receive grace to do that which before he was unable to do immediately. Again : 'Let the man who is willing, but cannot do what he wills, pray that he may have such a measure as suffices for fulfilling the commandments ; for he is so far assisted as to be able to do what is commanded.'³³⁶ Again : 'Free will is admonished by command to seek the gift of God ; but it would be admonished without fruit to itself, unless it had first received some little love, to induce it to seek such aid as would enable it to fulfil what was commanded.'³³⁷

Mark the words, 'some little love;' this means 'sufficient grace' whereby man is able to obtain by prayer actual grace to keep the commandments ; whereby 'he is induced to seek such aid as would enable him to fulfil what was commanded.' Again : 'He gives us commandments for this reason, that when we have tried to do what we are commanded, and are wearied through our infirmity, we may know how to ask the help of grace.'³³⁸ Here the saint supposes that with ordinary grace we are not able to do difficult things, but can by means of prayer obtain the aid necessary to accomplish them. Hence he goes on to say, "The Law entered that sin might abound," when men do not implore the aid of God's grace ; but when, by God's vocation, they understand to whom they must groan, and thereupon invoke Him, the succeeding words will be fulfilled : "Where sin abounded, grace superabounded." Here, as Petavius says, we see in express terms the want of abundant grace ; and, on the other hand, the presence of ordinary and common grace which enables men to pray, and which St. Augustine here calls 'God's vocation.'

In another place he says : 'Free-will is left to man in this mortal life, not to enable him to fulfil justice when he pleases, but to enable him to turn with pious supplications to Him by whose gift he can fulfil it.'³³⁹ When, therefore,

Augustine says that man is unable to fulfil the whole law, and that prayer is the only means given him to obtain help to fulfil it, he certainly supposes that God gives every man the grace of actual prayer, without need of a further extraordinary aid, not common to all men; otherwise, where this special aid was wanting, 'nothing would be left to the will' to observe all the commandments, or at least the more difficult of them. And when the saint speaks thus, he certainly cannot mean that 'sufficient grace' gives only the power, not the act of prayer; for so far as relates to power, it is certain that 'sufficient grace' gives power for even the most difficult works. Hence the holy father evidently means (as he teaches elsewhere) that easy things, such as prayer, may well be actually accomplished by any man with the 'sufficient grace;' and difficult things with the help which is obtained by means of prayer.

But there are two texts of St. Augustine which are peculiarly to the point. The first is this: 'It is certain that we can keep the commandments if we will; but since the will is prepared by God, we must ask Him, that we may have such a will as is sufficient to enable us to perform what we will.'³⁴⁰ Here he says that it is certain we could observe the law if we would; on the other hand he says that in order to will to do so, and actually to do so, we must pray. Therefore all men have grace given them to pray, and by prayer to obtain the abundant grace which makes us keep the commandments; otherwise, if for actual prayer, efficacious grace, which is not common to all, were requisite, those to whom it was not given would not be able to keep the commandments, nor to have the will to keep them.

The second text is that where the holy doctor answers the monks of Adramyttium, who said that 'if grace was necessary, and if we can do nothing without it, why blame when we cannot work, and have not grace to do so? You should rather pray God for us, that He would give us this grace.' St. Augustine answers: You must be blamed, not because you do not work when you have not strength, but because you do not pray to obtain strength: 'He who will not be admonished, and says, Do you rather pray for

me, must on that very account be admonished to do it (*i. e.* to pray) for himself.'³⁴¹ Now if the saint had not believed that every man has grace to pray (if he will) without need of further aid, he never could have said that these people were to be blamed for not praying; for they could have answered, that if they were not to be blamed for not working, when they had not special grace to enable them to work, in like manner they could not be blamed for not praying, when they had not special grace for actual prayer. This is what St. Augustine elsewhere says, 'Let them not deceive themselves who say, why are we commanded to abstain from evil and do good, if it is God who works in us both to will and to do it?' And he answers, that when men do good they should thank God for it, who gives them strength to do it; and when they do it not, they should pray to have the strength which they lack: 'But when they do it not (these are his words), let them pray that they may receive that which as yet they have not.'³⁴² Now if these people had not even the grace for the act of prayer, they might answer, 'Why are we commanded to pray, if God does not work in us to make us pray?' How are we to will to pray, if we do not receive the grace necessary for actual prayer?

St. Thomas does not speak expressly of prayer, but assumes the certainty of our proposition, when he says, 'It belongs to God's providence to provide every individual with what is necessary for salvation, provided he puts no impediment in the way.'³⁴³ Since, then, it is true on the one hand that God gives to all men the graces necessary for salvation, and on the other for prayer, we require the grace which enables us actually to pray, and thereby to obtain further and greater assistance to enable us to do that which we cannot compass with ordinary grace; it follows, necessarily, that God gives all men sufficient grace actually to pray if they will, without need of efficacious grace. Here we may add the answer of Bellarmine to the heretics, who inferred from the text, "No one can come to Me, unless My Father draw him," that no one could go to God, who was not properly drawn by Him. 'We answer,' he says, 'that the only conclusion from this text is, that all men

have not the efficacious grace to make them really believe ; but we cannot conclude that all men have not at least assistance which confers the possibility of believing ; or, at any rate, the possibility of asking for grace.³⁴⁴

Let us now proceed, in the third and last place, to examine the reasons of this opinion. Petavius, Duval, and other theologians ask why God imposes on us commands which we cannot keep with the common and ordinary grace ? Because, they answer, He wishes us to have recourse to Him in prayer, according to the general consent of the Fathers, as we have seen above. Hence they infer that we ought to hold it to be certain that every man has grace actually to pray, and by prayer to obtain greater grace to enable him to do that which is impossible to him with the ordinary grace ; otherwise God would have imposed an impossible law. This reason is very strong ; another is, that if God imposes on all men the duty of actual observance of His commandments, we must necessarily suppose that He also gives to all men the grace necessary for this actual observance, at least mediately, by means of prayer. In order, therefore, to uphold the reasonableness of the law, and the justice of the punishment of the disobedient, we must hold that every man has sufficient power, at least mediately, by means of prayer, for the actual satisfaction of the law ; and that at times he prays without need of an unusual and additional grace ; otherwise, if he had not this mediate or remote power of actually keeping the commandments, it could never be said that all men had from God sufficient grace for the actual observance of the law.

Thomassin and Tourneley accumulate many other reasons for this opinion ; but I pass them over to attend to one which seems to me demonstrative. It is founded on the precept of hope, which obliges us all to hope in God with confidence for eternal life ; and I say, that if we were not certain that God gives us all grace to enable us actually to pray, without need of another particular and unusual grace, no one without a special revelation could hope for salvation as he ought. But I must first explain the grounds of this argument.

The virtue of hope is so pleasing to God, that He has declared that He feels delight in those who trust in Him: "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that hope in His mercy" (Ps. cxlvi. 11). And He promises victory over His enemies, perseverance in grace, and eternal glory, to the man who hopes, because he hopes: "Because he hoped in Me, I will deliver him; I will protect him I will deliver him and I will glorify him" (Ps. xc. 14, 15). "Preserve me, for I have put my trust in Thee" (Ps. xv. 1). "He will save them, because they have hoped in Him" (Ps. xxxvi. 40). "No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded" (Ecclus. ii. 11). And let us be sure that the heaven and earth shall fail, but the promises of God cannot fail: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (St. Matt. xxiv. 35). St. Bernard, therefore, says, that all our merit consists in reposing all our confidence in God: 'This is the whole merit of man, if he places all his hope in Him.'³⁴⁵ The reason is, that he who hopes in God honours Him much: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. xlix. 15). He honours the power, the mercy, and the faithfulness of God; since he believes that God can and will save him; and that He cannot fail in His promises to save the man who trusts in Him. And the Prophet assures us that the greater is our confidence, the greater will be the measure of God's mercy poured out upon us: "Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in Thee" (Ps. xxxii. 22).

Now, as this virtue of hope is so pleasing to God, He has willed to impose it upon us by a precept that binds under mortal sin, as all theologians agree, and as is evident from many texts of Scripture. "Trust in Him, all ye congregations of people" (Ps. lxi. 9). "Ye that fear the Lord, hope in Him" (Ecclus. ii. 9). "Hope in thy God always" (Osee xii. 6). "Hope perfectly for that grace which is offered to you" (1 Pet. i. 15). Then this hope of eternal life ought to be sure and firm in us, according to the definition of St. Thomas: 'Hope is the certain expectation of beatitude.'³⁴⁶ And the sacred Council of Trent has expressly declared, 'All men ought to place and repose

a most firm hope in the help of God ; for God, unless they fail to correspond to His grace, as He has begun the good work, so will He finish it, working in them both to will and to perform.' And long before St. Paul had said of himself: "I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him" (2 Tim. i. 12). And herein is the difference between Christian and worldly hope. Worldly hope need only be an uncertain expectation : nor can it be otherwise ; for it is always doubtful whether a man who has promised a favour, may not hereafter change his mind, if he has not already changed it. But the Christian hope of eternal salvation is certain on God's part ; for He can and will save us, and has promised to save those who obey His law, and to this end has promised us all necessary graces to enable us to obey this law, if we ask for them. It is true that hope is accompanied by fear, as St. Thomas says ;³⁴⁷ but this fear does not arise from God's part, but from our own ; since we may at any time fail, by not corresponding as we ought, and by putting an impediment in the way of grace by our sins. Reasonably, then, did the Council of Trent condemn the innovators, who, because they entirely deprive man of free-will, are obliged to make every believer have an infallible certitude of perseverance and salvation. This error was condemned by the council ; because, as we have said, in order to obtain salvation, it is necessary for us to correspond ; and this correspondence of ours is uncertain and fallible. Hence God wills that we should, on the one hand, always fear for ourselves, lest we should fall into presumption, in trusting to our own strength ; but, on the other, that we should be always certain of His good will, and of His assistance to save us ; provided always that we ask Him for it ; in other words, that we might always have a secure confidence in His goodness. St. Thomas says that we ought to look with certainty to receive from God eternal happiness, confiding in His power and mercy, and believing that He can and will save us. 'Whoever has faith, is certain of God's power and mercy.'³⁴⁸

Now, as the hope of our salvation by God ought to be certain (as St. Thomas defines it), 'the certain expectation

of beatitude,' consequently the motive of our hope must also be certain; for if the foundation of our hope were uncertain, and admitted a doubt, we could not with any certainty hope and expect to receive salvation, and the means necessary for it, from the hands of God. But St. Paul will have us to be nothing less than firm and immovable in our hope, if we would be saved: "If so ye continue in the faith, grounded, and settled, and immoveable from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard" (Coloss. i. 23). In another place he repeats that our faith ought to be as immoveable as an anchor securely fixed; since it is grounded on the promises of God, who cannot lie: "And we desire that every one of you should show forth the same carefulness to the accomplishing of hope unto the end . . . That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm" (Heb. vi. 11, 18). Hence St. Bernard says that our hope cannot be uncertain, as it rests on God's promises: 'Nor does this expectation seem to us vain, or this hope doubtful, since we rely on the promises of the eternal truth.'³⁴⁹ In another place he says of himself, that his hope depends on three things,—the love which induced God to adopt us as His children, the truth of His promises, and His power to fulfil them: 'Three things I see in which my hope consists,—the love of adoption, the truth of promise, the power of performance.'³⁵⁰

And therefore the Apostle St. James declares that the man who desires the grace of God must ask for it not with hesitation, but with the confident certainty of obtaining it: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas. i. 6). For if he asks with hesitation, he shall obtain nothing: "For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, that is moved and carried about by the wind; therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" (Jas. i. 6). And St. Paul praises Abraham for not doubting God's promise; as he knew that when God promises, He cannot fail to perform: "In the promise, also, of God, he staggered not by distrust; but was strengthened in faith, giving

glory to God; most fully knowing that whatsoever He has promised, He is able also to perform" (Rom. iv. 20). Hence, also, Jesus Christ tells us that we shall then receive all the graces which we desire, when we ask them with a sure belief of receiving them: "Therefore I say to you, all things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive them, and they shall come unto you" (St. Mark xi. 24). In a word, God will not hear us, unless we have a sure confidence of being heard.

Now let us come to the point Our hope of salvation, and of receiving the means necessary for its attainment, must be certain on God's part. The motives on which this certainty are founded, as we have seen, are the power, the mercy, and the truth of God; and of these the strongest and most certain motive is God's infallible faithfulness to the promise which He has made to us through the merits of Jesus Christ, to save us, and to give us the graces necessary for our salvation; because, though we might believe God to be infinite in power and mercy, nevertheless, as Jovenino well observes, we could not feel confident expectation of God's saving us, unless He had surely promised to do so. But this promise is conditional, if we actively correspond to God's grace and pray, as is clear from the Scriptures: "Ask, and ye shall receive; if ye ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you. He will give good things to those that ask Him. We ought always to pray. Ye have not, because ye ask not. If any one wanteth wisdom, let him ask of God;" and many other texts which we have quoted before. For this cause the fathers and theologians, as we showed in Part I. Chapter I., maintain that prayer is a necessary means of salvation.

Now, if we were not certain that God gives to all men grace to enable them actually to pray, without need of a further, special, and unusual grace, we could have no certain and firm foundation for a certain hope of salvation in God, but only an uncertain and conditional foundation. When I am certain that by prayer I shall obtain eternal life, and all the graces necessary to attain it, and when I know that God will not deny me the grace of actual prayer, if I will (because He gives it to all men), then I have a

sure foundation for hoping in God for salvation, unless I fail on my part. But when I am in doubt whether or not God will give me that particular grace, which He does not give to all, but which is necessary for actual prayer, then I have not a certain foundation for my hope of salvation, but only a doubtful and uncertain one; since I cannot be sure that God will give me this special grace, without which I cannot pray, since He refuses it to so many. And in this case the uncertainty would not be only on my part, but also on God's part; and so Christian hope would be destroyed; which, according to the Apostle, ought to be immovable, firm, and secure. I really cannot see how a Christian can fulfil the precept of hope,—hoping, as he ought—with sure confidence for salvation from God, and for the graces necessary for its attainment,—unless he holds it as an infallible truth, that God commonly gives to every individual the grace actually to pray, if he chooses, without need of a further special assistance.

So that, to conclude, our system or opinion (held by so many theologians, and by our humble congregation) well agrees, on the one hand, with the doctrine of grace intrinsically efficacious, by means of which we infallibly, though freely, act virtuously; for it cannot be denied that God can easily, with his omnipotence, incline and move men's hearts freely to will that which He wills, as the Scriptures teach: "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will, He shall turn it" (Prov. xxi. 1); "I will put My Spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in My commandments" (Ezech. xxxvi. 27); "My counsel shall stand, and all My will shall be done" (Is. xlvi. 10); "He changeth the heart of the princes of the people of the earth" (Job. xii. 24); "May the God of peace make you perfect in every good work, that you may do His will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ" (Heb. xiii. 21). And it cannot be denied that St. Augustine and St. Thomas have taught the opinion of the efficaciousness of grace in itself, by its own nature. This is evident from many passages, and specially from the following. St. Augustine says: 'Yet God did not this, except by the

will of the men themselves ; since He no doubt has the most almighty and absolute power of inclining the hearts of men.^{'351} Again : ' Almighty God works in the hearts of men, that He may do by their means that which he has determined to do.'³⁵² Again : ' Although they all do what is right in the service of God, yet He causes them to do what He commands.'³⁵³ Again : ' It is certain that we act, when we act ; but He causes us to act, by bestowing most efficacious powers on the will, according to His word, " I will make you to walk in my justifications." '³⁵⁴ Again, on the text, " For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish according to His good will" (Phil. ii. 13), he says : ' We therefore will ; but God worketh in us, both to will and to perform.'³⁵⁵ Again : ' As the will is prepared by God, we must pray that we may have as much will as is sufficient to make us act when we will '³⁵⁶ Again : ' God knows how to work in men's hearts, not so as to make them believe against their will, which is impossible, but so as to make them willing instead of unwilling.'³⁵⁷ Again : ' He works in men's hearts, not only true revelations, but also good-will.'³⁵⁸ Again : ' Our acts of will have just so much power as God chooses them to have.'³⁵⁹ Again : ' The wills which preserve the system of creation are in such sort in God's power, that He makes them incline where He will, and when He will.'³⁶⁰ So St. Thomas : ' God infallibly moves the will by the efficacy of the moving power, which cannot fail.'³⁶¹ Again : ' Love has the character of impeccability, from the power of the Holy Spirit, who infallibly works whatever He will ; hence it is impossible that these two things should be at the same time true,—that the Holy Spirit wills to move a person to an act of love, and that at the same time the person should lose love by an act of sin.'³⁶² Again : ' If God moves the will to any thing, it is impossible to say that the will is not moved to it.'³⁶³

On the other hand, our opinion is quite consonant to the doctrine of truly sufficient grace being given to all, by corresponding to which a man will gain efficacious grace ; while by not corresponding, but resisting, he will deservedly be refused this efficacious grace. And thus all

excuse is taken away from those sinners who say that they have not strength to overcome their temptations ; because if they had prayed, and made use of the ordinary grace which is given to all men, they would have obtained strength, and would have been saved. Otherwise, if a person does not admit this ordinary grace, by which every one is enabled at least to pray (without needing a further special and unusual grace), and by prayer to obtain further assistance to enable him to fulfil the law, I do not know how he can explain all those texts of the Scriptures, where souls are exhorted to return to God, to overcome temptation, and to correspond to the Divine call : "Return, ye transgressors, to the heart" (Is. xlv. 8) ; "Return, and live ;" "Be converted, and do penance" (Ezech. xviii. 30, 32) ; "Loose the bonds from off thy neck" (Is. lii. 2) ; "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened" (St. Matt. xi. 28) ; "Resist, strong in faith" (1 St. Peter v. 9) ; "Walk whilst you have the light" (St. John xii. 35). I cannot tell, I say, supposing it were true that the grace of prayer were not given to all, to enable them thereby to obtain the further assistance necessary for salvation, how these texts could be explained, and how the sacred writers could so forcibly exhort all men, without any exception, to be converted, to resist the enemy, to walk in the way of virtue, and, for this end, to pray with confidence and perseverance, —if the grace of doing well, or at least of praying, were not granted to all, but only to those who have the gift of efficacious grace. And I cannot see where would be the justice of the reproof given to all sinners without exception, who resist grace, and despise the voice of God : "You always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii. 51) ; "Because I called, and you refused ; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded ; you have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions" (Prov. i. 24). If they were without even the remote but efficacious grace of prayer, which our opponents consider necessary for actual prayer, I cannot tell how all these reproofs could be justly made against them.

I have done. Some, perhaps, will wish that I had given more space to the distinct examination of the ques-

tion so much controverted, wherein consists the efficaciousness of grace, and which the systems of different schools attribute to a physical premotion, to congruous grace, to concomitant grace, to a delectation which overcomes by reason of a moral action, or to a delectation which overcomes by reason of its superiority in degree. But for this, such a book as this, which I deliberately intended should be small, and easily readable, would not have been enough. To explore this vast sea, many volumes would have been required. But this work has been sufficiently performed by others, and moreover, it was beside my purpose. Still, I wished to establish the point treated of in my second part, for the honour of God's providence and goodness, and to be of assistance to sinners, to prevent them giving themselves up to despair, because they think themselves deprived of grace; and also to take from them all excuse, if they say that they have not strength to resist the assaults of the senses and of hell; for I have shown them, that of those who are lost, no one is damned for the original sin of Adam, but solely for his own fault, because God refuses to no one the grace of prayer, whereby we may obtain His assistance to overcome every concupiscence, and every temptation. For the rest, my principal intention was to recommend to all men the use of prayer as the most powerful and necessary means of grace, in order that all men should more diligently and earnestly attend to it, if they wish to be saved; for many poor souls lose God's grace, and continue to live in sin, and are finally damned, for this very reason, that they do not pray, nor have recourse to God for assistance. The worst of the matter is (I cannot help saying it), that so few preachers and so few confessors have any definite purpose of indocinating their hearers and penitents with the use of prayer, without which it is impossible to observe the law of God, and to obtain perseverance in His grace.

I, having observed that so many passages, both of the Old and New Testament, assert the absolute necessity of prayer, have made it a rule to introduce into all the missions, as given by our congregation for several years, a sermon on prayer; and I say, and repeat, and will keep

repeating as long as I live, that all our salvation depends on prayer ; and, therefore, that all writers in their books, all preachers in their sermons, all confessors in their instructions to their penitents, should not inculcate any thing more strongly than continual prayer ; they should always admonish, exclaim, and continually repeat, Pray, pray, never cease to pray ; for if you pray, your salvation will be secure ; but if you leave off praying, your damnation will be certain. All preachers and directors ought to do this ; because, according to the opinion of every Catholic school, there is no doubt of this truth, that he who prays, obtains grace and is saved ; but those who practise it are too few, and this is why so few are saved.

A SHORT TREATISE
ON
THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER,

**ITS EFFICACY, AND THE CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR ITS DUE
PERFORMANCE.**

§ 1. THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

ALTHOUGH it is blasphemy to say with Luther and Calvin that the fall of Adam has made it impossible for men to keep God's law; and although it is also an error, condemned by the Church, to say with Jansenius that some precepts are impossible even to the just, with their present strength, and that God does not give them aid to enable them to fulfil them; whereas the Council of Trent has declared that God does not command impossibilities, but admonishes us to do what we can with the assistance of the ordinary grace with which we are always furnished, and then to pray Him to give us the further grace requisite to enable us to fulfil that which otherwise is beyond our strength, upon which He gives us the assistance which we require: in the words of the Council, 'God does not command impossible things; but, by commanding, He admonishes thee both to do what thou canst, and to pray for that which is beyond thy strength; and He assists thee, so as to make thee able to do it.' And hence many sound theologians teach that God gives, or at least offers, to all men either the grace which immediately enables them actually to fulfil the commandments, or at any rate the remote grace which enables them to pray, and by means of prayer to obtain the proximate grace by which they can actually observe the command-

ments of God : yet, for all this, there can be no doubt that the observance of the law, in the present state of our corrupt nature, is very difficult, and even morally impossible without a special assistance of God, and more abundant than that which man required in the state of innocence. Now, ordinarily speaking, God only gives this special assistance to those who pray for it. St. Augustine teaches, that with the exception of the first motions of grace—such as the first call to faith or to penance, which come to us without our concurrence—all other graces, and especially that of perseverance, are only given to those persons who pray for them : ‘ We believe that no one comes to be saved, except by the call of God. That no one who is called works out his own salvation, except by the assistance of God ; and that no one merits this assistance, except by prayer.’ And elsewhere he assumes it as certain, ‘ that God gives us a few things even when we do not pray, such as the beginnings of faith ; but that he has provided the rest only for those who pray.’

From this theologians (such as Suarez, Habert, Layman, F. Segneri, and others, with St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Basil, St. Augustine, and St. Chrysostom,) conclude that prayer is necessary to adults, if not as an end, yet as a means ; that is to say, in the ordinary course of Providence, no Christian can be saved without recommending himself to God, and asking Him for the graces necessary for his salvation. St Chrysostom says, that as the soul is necessary for the life of the body, so is prayer necessary for the soul to preserve it in the grace of God. This, too, is the meaning of those words of Jesus Christ : “ Men ought always to pray, and not to faint ” (St. Luke xviii. 1). Men ought—it is necessary for them always to pray. St. James teaches us the same thing : “ You have not, because you ask not ” (St. James iv. 2) ; and the same lesson is taught us in that short sentence which our Saviour spoke : “ Ask, and it shall be given you ” (St. Luke xi. 9). If, then, says St. Teresa, he who asks obtains, he that does not ask does not obtain. God wishes the salvation of all men : “ He willeth all men to be saved ” (1 Tim. ii. 4) ; but He wills that we should ask Him for the graces which

are necessary for our salvation. Shall we refuse to do such a little thing as this?

Let us conclude this first point by gathering from what we have said, that he who prays is certain to be saved; while he who prays not is certain to be damned. All the saints were saved, and came to be saints, by praying; all the accursed souls in hell were lost through neglect of prayer: if they had prayed, it is certain that they would not have been lost. And this shall be one of the greatest occasions of their anguish in hell, the thought that they might have saved themselves so easily; that they **had** only to beg God to help them, but that now the time is past when this could avail them.

§ 2. THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

The holy Scriptures are full of texts in which God tells us that He hears all our prayers. In one place He says: "He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him" (Ps. xc. 15). In another: "Thou shalt pray to Him, and He shall hear thee" (Job xxii. 27). In another: "Cry to Me, and I will hear thee" (Jer. xxxiii. 3). Again: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee" (Ps. xlix. 15). Thou shalt cry, and I will deliver thee from the danger of being damned. Again: "Who hath called upon Him, and He despised Him?" (Ecclus. ii. 2.) Has it ever occurred that God has turned a deaf ear to the prayers of any one that called upon Him? Again: "At the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee" (Is. xxx. 19). He will hear and respond to thy prayer immediately. Again: "As they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Is. lxxv. 24). Before they have time to finish their petitions, I will answer them. Again: "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy, from me" (Ps. lxxv. 20). Our prayer is always accompanied by God's mercy; hence St. Augustine remarks upon this text, that when we find ourselves calling on God, we ought to feel very happy, because when we are praying, we ought to feel certain that God is hearing us: 'When you see that your prayer is not removed from you, be sure that His mercy is not removed from you either.'

Again: "You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done to you" (St. John xv. 7). Ask what you like; it is enough to ask, and it shall be granted to you.

Hence Theodoret says that prayer is omnipotent: 'It is one, but can obtain all things.' And St. Bonaventure says, that by prayer we obtain every good, and are delivered from every evil: 'By it is obtained the enjoyment of every good, and deliverance of every ill.' And if, adds St. Bernard, at times God does not give us the grace which we ask, we ought to feel quite convinced that He is giving us in its stead some grace that is more needful to us. O Lord, said David, Thou art full of pity and mercy to all those who pray to Thee: "Thou, O Lord, art sweet, and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee" (Ps. lxxx. 5). And St. James says: "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all abundantly, and upbraideth not" (St. James i. 5). To those who pray, God gives with no sparing hand, as do the rich of this world, for their wealth soon comes to an end; but God's riches are infinite, and the more He gives the more He has to give, and therefore He gives abundantly, with unsparing hand, far surpassing ought that we can ask. "And upbraids not;" does not cast in our teeth the insults we have offered Him when we go to ask favours of Him.

The nature of goodness is to be diffusive; and therefore God, whose very essence is infinite goodness ('His nature is goodness,' says St. Leo), has the greatest possible desire to communicate to us His good things and His own happiness, and is therefore anxious for our good. "The Lord is careful for me" (Ps. xxxix. 18), said David; and this made the royal prophet exclaim: "In whatsoever day I shall call upon Thee, behold I know that Thou art my God" (Ps. lv. 10). O Lord, he would say, whenever I call upon Thee, I at once know that Thou art my God; that is, that Thou art the infinite goodness, who desirest us to pray to Thee, to give Thee an opportunity to shower Thy benefits upon us; for as soon as we begin to ask Thee for grace, Thou dost at once give it. One day a miserable leper presented himself to our Saviour, and said to Him: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean;" and Jesus answered,

"I will; be thou made clean" (St. Matt. viii. 2, 3); as though He had said: Ah, My child, dost thou doubt of My willingness to cure thee; dost thou not know that I am thy God, and that My desire is to see all My creatures happy? And for what cause am I come down from heaven to earth, if not to make all men happy? Yes, I will; be thou healed.

Many persons complain that God does not give them the graces which they wish for. But, says St. Bernard, how much reason has God to complain of them that they do not pray, and that by this neglect they close His hand, which He would be so glad to open for their benefit: 'Many complain that grace fails them; but much more justly might grace complain that many fail her.' No, do not complain of Me, says our Lord, if you have not received from Me the graces of which you stood in need; complain of yourselves for not having asked Me for them, which is the real reason why you have not received them; pray for them from this day forward, and ye shall be satisfied to the full: "Hitherto ye have not asked any thing. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (St. John xvi. 24).

The monks of old once held a council among themselves to examine which was the most useful exercise to secure eternal salvation, and they concluded that it was to beseech God in prayer, with the words, 'Incline unto my aid, O God!' And F. Paul Segneri tells us, that when he began the practice of meditation, his chief object was to elicit affections; but that afterwards, when he came to know the great utility and necessity of prayer, he was careful to make it the principal part of his meditation.

But how does it come to pass that some persons pray, but yet do not receive? They pray, indeed, but they do not pray as they ought, and this is why they obtain nothing: "You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss" (St. James iv. 3). Many persons seek for grace, but do not observe the proper conditions. Let us see, then, what are the necessary conditions of prayer, in order to make it efficacious to obtain the graces we desire.

§ 3. THE CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR THE DUE PERFORMANCE OF PRAYER.

1st. Prayer must be humble : “ God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble ” (St. James iv. 6). Here St. James tells us that God does not listen to the prayers of the proud, but resists them ; while, on the other hand, He is always ready to hear the prayers of the humble : “ The prayer of the man that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, . . . and he will not depart till the Most High behold ” (Ecclus. xxxv. 21). The prayer of a humble soul at once penetrates the heaven, and presents itself before the throne of God, and will not depart thence till God regards it and listens to it. However sinful such a soul may be, God can never despise a heart that repents of its sins, and humbles itself : “ A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise ” (Ps. l. 19).

2dly. Prayer must be confident : “ No one hath hoped in the Lord, and been confounded ” (Ecclus. ii. 11). The Holy Ghost assures us that it never has happened that any one who placed his trust in God has been deceived. He once said to St. Gertrude, that a person who prays to Him with confidence does Him, in a certain way, such violence, that He cannot but listen to him, and grant all his requests. ‘ Prayer,’ said St. John Climacus, ‘ is a pious way of forcing God.’ Prayer does violence to Him ; but a violence which He loves and delights in. ‘ This violence is pleasing to God.’ In the “ Our Father,” which is the prayer which Jesus Christ Himself taught us as a means whereby to obtain all the graces necessary for our salvation, how are we made to address God ? Not as Lord, not as Judge, but as Father, “ our Father,” because He wishes us to ask God for grace with the same confidence as a son, when he is hungry or ill, asks his own father for food or medicine. If a son is famished, he has only to tell his father, and he will be immediately fed ; if he has been bitten by a venomous serpent, he has only to show the wound, and his father will apply the best remedy that he has. For this cause, our Saviour has told us, “ All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they

shall come unto you" (St. Mark xi. 24). We have, then, only to pray to God with confidence in order to obtain all that we desire. And however could our Lord have exhorted us so earnestly to pray for grace, unless He had wished to give it? 'He would not have exhorted us (says St. Augustine) to ask, unless He had been willing to grant.' The woman of Canaan, whose daughter was possessed by a devil, went to beseech Jesus Christ to deliver her from him, and said: "Have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously vexed by a devil." Jesus answered: "I am not sent except to the sheep of Israel;" My mission is not to you Gentiles, only to the Jews. Yet she did not lose heart, but confidently repeated her prayer: O Lord, Thou canst console me; "Lord help me!" Jesus replied: But the children's bread must not be given to dogs: "It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to give it to dogs." But, Lord, she replied, even the dogs are allowed the crumbs of bread which fall from the table: "Even the whelps eat of the crumbs." Upon which our Lord, having proved the great confidence of the woman, praised her for it, and did what she asked: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was healed from that hour" (St. Matt. xv. 22-28).

Thus confidence is necessary to obtain what we ask of God. But on what, it may be said, are we to found this confidence? On what? on the goodness of God, and on the promise which He made when He said: "Ask, and you shall receive." 'Who,' says St. Augustine, 'fears to be deceived when the Truth promises?' Who can ever fear that what is promised will not be given to him, when it is God, the Sovereign Truth, who has promised?

3dly. Prayer should be persevering, otherwise it will not obtain eternal life. The grace of salvation is not a single grace, but is a chain of graces all united with the grace of final perseverance. Now to this chain of graces there must be a corresponding chain of prayers on our part. There is in St. Luke (chap. xi.) a parable of a man, who, to rid himself of the importunity of his friend, got out of bed, and gave him the loaves which he wanted. On this St. Augustine says: 'Now, if this man, simply to rid

himself of the importunity of his friend, would, against his will, give him the bread which he asked for, 'how much more will the good God give, who exhorts us to ask Him?' How much more will God, who has such a desire to make us partakers in His good things, dispense to us His graces when we ask Him for them? Especially as He commands us to beg of Him, and is displeased when we do not do so. God then wishes to grant us eternal life, and all the graces necessary for its attainment; but He also wishes us to be persevering in prayer. As Cornelius à Lapide says on this parable: 'He wishes us to be persevering in prayer, so as to be even importunate.' Men cannot endure importunity; but God not only endures it, but wishes us to be importunate in begging for His grace, and especially for the grace of final perseverance.

It is true that we cannot merit final perseverance, as the Council of Trent has declared; for it is a gift that God gives us quite gratuitously; nevertheless St. Augustine tells us, that perseverance may, in a certain way, be merited by prayer: 'This gift of God may be merited in the way of begging; that is, it may be obtained by supplication.' So that the man who asks for perseverance, though he cannot merit it, will yet, as Suarez says, infallibly obtain it. But, says Bellarmine, 'it is not enough to ask for it once, we must ask it daily, in order to obtain it daily.' And therefore Jesus Christ says: "Men ought always pray, and not to faint" (St. Luke xviii. 1). We must never cease from prayer; for when we do so, temptation may overcome us: "Watch ye therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man" (St. Luke xxi. 36). 'Be watchful in continual prayer,' says Jesus Christ, 'that I may not have to drive you from Me when you stand before My judgment-seat.' Well therefore does St. Paul admonish his disciples: "Pray without ceasing." (Thess. v. 17). Pray, and never cease from praying.

"Blessed is the man that heareth Me, and that watcheth daily at My doors" (Prov. viii. 34). God pronounces him to be blessed who continually watches at the doors of His mercy. And therefore in the following words of the

Gospel Jesus Christ not only exhorts us, but also commands us to pray (for prayer is not only a counsel, but a precept): "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (St. Luke xi. 9). It might seem enough to have said 'ask,' without adding 'seek,' and 'knock.' But no, this repetition is not superfluous; for this was our Saviour's way of teaching us to do like the poor beggars, who, if they do not at once receive the relief they demand and are turned away, still keep on demanding it over and over again, and then begin knocking at the door, and insist on seeing the master of the house, and, indeed, make themselves exceedingly importunate and troublesome. This is how our Lord wishes us to do: to pray, and pray again, and never cease praying Him to assist us, to keep His hand over us, and never to permit us to separate ourselves from Him by sin. And this we should do, not only when we rise in the morning, but oftentimes during the day: when we hear Mass, when we make our meditation, when we make our thanksgiving after communion, when we pay our visit to the Blessed Sacrament, when we examine our conscience at night, but above all when we are assailed by any temptation, especially if it is a temptation to impurity; the man who does not in this case have recourse to God, and at least invoke the holy names of Jesus and Mary, will scarcely be able to avoid falling.

But a person might say, I am a sinner, and God does not hear sinners, as we read in St. John's Gospel: "God doth not hear sinners" (St. John ix. 31). I answer, that these words were not spoken by our Lord, but by the man who had been born blind. And the proposition, if taken absolutely, is false; there is only one case in which it is true, as St. Thomas says, and that is when sinners pray *quâ* sinners; that is, ask something which they require to assist them in their sin; as, for instance, if a man asked God to help him to take vengeance of his enemy; in such cases God certainly will not hear. But when a man prays and asks for those things which are requisite for his salvation, what matters it whether he is a sinner or not? Suppose he were the greatest criminal in the world, let him only pray,

he will surely obtain all that he asks. The promise is general for all men; every one that seeks obtains: "Every one that asketh receiveth" (St. Luke xi. 10). 'It is not necessary,' says St. Thomas, 'that the man who prays should merit the grace for which he asks.' 'By prayer we obtain even those things which we do not deserve.' In order to receive, it is enough to pray. The reason is (in the words of the same holy doctor), 'merit is grounded on justice, but the power of prayer (*impetratio*) is grounded on grace.' The power of prayer to obtain what we ask does not depend on the merit of the person who prays, but on the mercy and faithfulness of God, who has gratuitously, and of His own mere goodness, promised to hear the man who prays to Him. When we pray, it is not necessary that we should be friends of God in order to obtain grace; indeed the act of prayer, as St. Thomas says, makes us His friends: 'Prayer itself makes us of the family of God.' And that which we cannot obtain through friendship, we may (as St. Chrysostom in a similar way affirms) obtain by prayer: 'That which friendship could not accomplish, has been accomplished by prayer.' And Jesus Christ, to give us more encouragement to pray, and to assure us of obtaining grace when we pray, has made us that great and special promise: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). As though He had said, Come, sinners, you have no merits of your own for which My Father should listen to you. But this is what you must do; when you want grace, ask for it in My name, and through My merits, and I promise you ('Amen, amen, I say to you,' amounts to a kind of oath), you may depend on it, that whatever you ask, you shall obtain from My Father: 'Whatever you shall ask, He will give it you.' Oh, what a sweet consolation for a poor sinner, to know that his sins are no hindrance to his obtaining every grace he asks for, since Jesus Christ has promised, that whatever we ask of God through His merits, He will grant it all.

It is, however, necessary to understand that our Lord's promise to hear our prayers does not apply to our petitions for temporal goods, but only to those for spiritual graces

necessary, or at any rate useful, for the salvation of the soul : so that we can only expect to obtain the graces which we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, as we said just now. ‘But,’ as St. Augustine says, ‘if we ask any thing prejudicial to our salvation, it cannot be said to be asked in the name of the Saviour.’ That which is injurious to salvation cannot be expected from the Saviour ; God does not and cannot grant it ; and why ? because He loves us. A physician who has any regard for a sick man, will not permit him to have food which he knows will injure him. And how many people would be prevented from committing the sins which they do commit, if they were poor or sick. Many people ask for health or riches, but God does not give them, because He sees they would be an occasion of sin, or at least of growing lukewarm in His service. So when we ask these temporal gifts, we ought always to add this condition, if they are profitable for our souls. And when we see that God does not give them, let us rest assured that He refuses them only because He loves us, and because He sees that the things which we ask would only damage our spiritual well-being.

And often we ask God to deliver us from some troublesome temptation, which would persuade us to forfeit His grace ; but God does not deliver us, in order that our soul may be more closely united in love to Him. It is not temptations or bad thoughts that hurt us, and separate us from God, but consent to evil. When the soul, through the assistance of God’s grace, resists a temptation, it makes a great advance in the way of perfection. St. Paul tells us, that he was very much troubled with temptations and impurity, and that he prayed God thrice to deliver him from them : “A sting of my flesh, an angel of Satau, was given me to buffet me ; for which thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.” And what did the Lord answer ? He told him, it is enough for you to have My grace : “My grace is sufficient for thee” (1 Cor. xii. 7-9). Thus should we in the temptations which assault us pray God to deliver us from them, or at least to help us to resist them. And when we thus pray, we should be

quite certain that God is already helping us to resist them: "Thou calledst upon Me in affliction, and I delivered thee. I heard thee in the secret place of tempest" (Ps. lxxxviii. 8). Often does God leave us in the storm for our greater good; but still He hears us in secret, and gives us His grace to strengthen us to resist and to be resigned.

So, I repeat, all temporal gifts which are not necessary for salvation ought to be asked conditionally; and if we see that God does not give them, we must feel sure that He refuses them for our greater good. But with regard to spiritual graces, we must be certain that God gives them to us when we ask Him. St. Teresa says that God loves us more than we love ourselves. And St. Augustine has declared that God has a greater desire to give us His grace than we have to receive it: 'He is more willing to bestow His favours upon you, than you are desirous of receiving them.' And after him, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi has said that God feels a kind of obligation to the soul that prays, and as it were says to it, 'Soul, I thank thee that thou askest Me for grace.' For then the soul gives Him an opportunity of doing good to it, and of thus satisfying His desire of giving His grace to all. And how can it ever happen that God will not hear a soul that asks for the things which He most delights to give? When the soul says, 'Lord, I ask Thee not for riches, honours, the goods of this world, but I only beg for Thy grace; deliver me from sin, give me a good death, give me Paradise, and meanwhile give me Thy love (which is the grace that, as St. Francis of Sales says, we ought to pray for above all others), give me resignation to Thy will (which is the virtue in which the whole of the love of God consists), when the soul prays thus, how is it possible that God should refuse to hear it? And what prayers, O my God, wilt Thou ever hear (says St. Augustine), if Thou hearest not those which are made as Thou wishest them to be made: 'If Thou hearest not these, what dost Thou hear?' And St. Bernard says, that when we ask for spiritual graces of this kind, the desire of obtaining them can only come to us from God Himself; so the saint turns to God, and says to Him, 'Wherefore hast Thou given the desire, unless Thou wert

willing to satisfy it.' Since Thou, O Lord, dost put into my heart to ask for these graces, I ought to be certain that Thou art willing to hear my prayer. But, above all, the words of Jesus Christ ought to revive our confidence, when we are praying for spiritual graces : " If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the Good Spirit to them that ask Him" (St. Luke xi. 13). If you, who are full of evil, and of self-love, are unable to refuse your children the good things which they ask, how much more will your heavenly Father, who loves you more than any earthly father can love his family, grant you His spiritual gifts, when you ask Him for them.

Let us pray, then, and let us always be asking for grace, if we wish to be saved. Let prayer be our most delightful occupation, let prayer be the exercise of our whole life. And when we are asking for particular graces, let us always pray for the grace to continue to pray for the future ; because if we leave off praying we shall be lost. There is nothing easier than prayer. What does it cost us to say, Lord stand by me ! Lord help me ! give me Thy love ! and the like ? What can be easier than this ? But if we do not do it, we cannot be saved. Let us pray then, and let us always shelter ourselves behind the intercession of Mary : ' Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it through Mary,' says St. Bernard. And when we recommend ourselves to Mary, let us be sure that she hears us and obtains for us whatever we want. She cannot lack either the power or the will to help us, as the same saint says : ' Neither means nor will can be wanting to her.' And St. Augustine addresses her : ' Remember, O most pious Lady, that it has never been heard that any one who fled to thy protection was forsaken.' Remember that the case has never occurred of a person having recourse to thee, and having been abandoned. Ah, no, says St. Bonaventure, he who invokes Mary, finds salvation ; and therefore he calls her ' the salvation of those who invoke her.' Let us, then, in our prayers always invoke Jesus and Mary ; and let us never neglect to pray.

I have done. But before concluding, I cannot help

saying how grieved I feel when I see that though the holy Scriptures and the Fathers so often recommend the practice of prayer, yet so few other religious writers, or confessors, or preachers, ever speak of it; or if they do speak of it, just touch upon it in a cursory way, and leave it. But I, seeing the necessity of prayer, say, that the great lesson which all spiritual books should inculcate on their readers, all preachers on their hearers, and all confessors on their penitents, is this, to pray always; thus they should admonish them to pray; pray, and never give up praying. If you pray, you will be certainly saved; if you do **not** pray, you will be certainly **damned**.

A

CHRISTIAN'S RULE OF LIFE.

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In this rule the first chapter treats of the means we must make use of to keep ourselves in the grace of God. In the second, the acts of those devout exercises which should be practised are set forth at length. In the third is shown the exercise of the principal virtues which a Christian ought to practise.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE MEANS OF PRESERVING THE GRACE OF GOD.

WE must be fully persuaded, that in order to obtain eternal salvation, it is not sufficient to wish to be saved; but we must further take the means which have been left us by Jesus Christ. Otherwise, if we commit sins, it will not avail us in the day of judgment to excuse ourselves by saying that the temptations were great, and we were weak; because God has given us the means, through His grace, to conquer all the assaults of our enemies: if, then, we will not take advantage of them, and are overcome, the fault is our own. All men desire to be saved; but because they omit to employ the means of salvation, they sin, and are lost.

1. *To fly the occasions of sin.*

The first means is, to avoid all occasions of sin. It is impossible for any one who does not endeavour to fly from the occasions of sin, especially in the matter of sensual pleasures, to avoid falling into sin. St. Philip Neri said: 'In the war of the senses, the conquerors are the *cowards* who fly.' The occasion is like a veil put before our eyes, so that we can see nothing else—neither God, nor hell, nor the resolutions we had made. The Scripture says, it is

impossible to walk on burning coals without being burnt. "Or can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?" (Prov. vi. 28.) So it is morally impossible for any one to put himself voluntarily into the occasion of sin and not to fall, although he may have made a thousand resolutions and a thousand promises to God. This is clearly shown every day by the misery of so many poor souls who are plunged into vice for not avoiding the occasions. Any one who has had the evil habit of sins of impurity must know that, in order to restrain himself, it is not enough merely to avoid those occasions which are absolutely proximate; for if he does not also fly from those which are not altogether proximate, he will easily fall again. Nor must we allow ourselves to be deceived by the devil into thinking that the person towards whom we are tempted is a saint; it often happens that the more devout a person is, the stronger is the temptation. St. Thomas Aquinas says, that the holiest persons attract the most. The temptation will commence in a spiritual way, and will terminate carnally. The great servant of God F. Sertorio Caputo, of the Society of Jesus, said that the devil first induces one to love a person's virtue, then the person, and then blinds a man and brings him to ruin. We must also fly from evil companions: we are too weak; the devil continually is tempting us, and the senses are drawing us to evil; the slightest suggestion of a bad companion is alone wanting to make us fall. Therefore the first thing that we have to do to save ourselves is to avoid evil occasions and bad companions. And we must in this matter use violence with ourselves, resolutely overcoming all human respect. Those who do not use violence with themselves will not be saved. It is true, that we must not put confidence in our own strength, but only in the Divine assistance; but God wills that we should do our part in using violence with ourselves, when it is *necessary* to do so, in order to gain Paradise: "The violent bear it away" (St. Matt. xi. 12).

2. *Mental Prayer.*

The second means is *mental prayer*. Without this, the soul will find it almost impossible to remain a long time

in the grace of God. The Holy Spirit says : " In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclus. vii. 40). He who often meditates on the four last things, namely death, judgment, and the eternity of hell and paradise, will not fall into sin : these truths are not to be seen by the [natural] eyes, but only with the eyes of the mind : if they are not meditated on, they vanish from the mind ; and then the pleasures of the senses present themselves, and those who do not keep before themselves the eternal truths are easily taken up by them ; and this is why so many abandon themselves to vice, and are damned. All Christians know and believe that they must die, and that we shall all be judged ; but because they do not think about it, they live far from God. Without mental prayer there is no light, we walk in the dark ; and walking in the dark, we do not see the danger we are in, we do not make use of the means we ought, nor pray to God to help us, and so we are lost. Without prayer we have neither light nor strength to advance in the ways of God ; because without prayer we do not ask God to give us His grace, and without so praying we shall certainly fall. It was for this reason that Cardinal Bellarmine declared it to be morally impossible for a Christian who did not meditate to persevere in the grace of God. Whereas one who makes his meditation every day can scarcely fall into sin ; and if unhappily he should fall on some occasion, by continuing his prayer he will return immediately to God. It was said by a servant of God, that ' mental prayer and mortal sin cannot exist together.' Resolve, then, to make every day, either in the morning or in the evening,—but it is best in the morning,—half an hour's meditation. In the following chapter you will see briefly explained an easy method for making this prayer. For the rest, it is sufficient that during that time you should entertain your thoughts by reading some book of meditations, either this one, or one of the many there are ; and from time to time excite some good affection or some aspiration, as you will find pointed out in the following paragraph. Above all, I beg you never to leave off this prayer, which you should practise at least once a day, although you may be in great aridity, and

should feel great weariness in doing it. If you do not discontinue it, you will be certainly saved.

Together with prayer, it is of great use to make a spiritual reading, in private, in some book which treats of the life of a saint or of the Christian virtues, during half, or at least a quarter of an hour. How many by reading a pious book have changed their way of living and become saints! Like St. John Colombino, St. Ignatius Loyola, and so many others. It would also be a most useful thing if you were every year to make a retreat in some religious house. But at any rate do not omit your daily meditation.

3. *The frequentation of the Sacraments.*

The third means is *frequenting the sacraments of confession and communion*. By confession the soul keeps itself purified; and by it not only obtains remission of sins, but also greater strength to resist temptations. For this purpose you should choose your director, and always confess to the same, consulting him on all more important matters, even temporal ones; and obey him in every thing, especially if you are distressed by scruples. He who obeys his confessor need not fear to go astray: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (St. Luke x. 16). The voice of the confessor is the voice of God.

The holy Communion is called heavenly bread, because as common bread preserves the life of the body, so the Communion preserves the life of the soul: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man . . . you shall not have life in you" (St. John vi. 52). On the other hand, to those who often eat this bread eternal life is promised: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (St. John vi. 52). Therefore the Council of Trent calls the Communion 'the medicine which delivers us from venial sins, and preserves us from mortal ones.' You should, then, resolve to go to Communion at least once a week, being determined not to give it up for any thing in the world; there is no affair of greater importance than that of your eternal salvation. Indeed, the longer you remain in the world, the greater need you have of assistance, because your tempta-

tions are greater. A certain learned priest wrote three books against the opinion which I had maintained, namely, that a person who desires to keep himself in the grace of God may be allowed to communicate every week, although he may not be purified from the affection to venial sins. On this matter, I beg the reader to read the last answer in my *Istruzione Morale* lately printed, in vol. iii. append. 1, § 4, at the end. To make a good confession, as also a good communion, see the following chapter, where you will also find the acts which may be made before and after confession and communion by way of preparation and thanksgiving.

4. *To hear Mass.*

The fourth means is to *hear Mass* every day. When we assist at Mass we give more honour to God than all the angels and saints in heaven can give Him, because theirs is the honour of creatures; but in the Mass we offer to God Jesus Christ, who gives Him an infinite honour. Read the following chapter, where you will also find a way of assisting at Mass with much profit.

5. *The visit to the Most Holy Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin.*

The fifth means is to make a visit every day to the most holy Sacrament in some church, and to the Divine Mother before some devout image. Jesus Christ dwells on the altars of so many churches in order to dispense graces to all who come to visit Him; and thus the souls of those who practise this beautiful devotion receive innumerable benefits from it. At the end of the next chapter you will find the prayer which may be said when visiting the most holy Sacrament, and one you should say in visits to the Divine Mother. The graces you ought especially to ask for, both from Jesus and Mary, are, the love of God, and holy perseverance till death.

6. *Prayer.*

The sixth means which I recommend you above all to put in practice is holy prayer. It is certain that without the Divine assistance we can do nothing good for our souls. God also has declared that graces are granted to those only

who ask for them : " Ask, and it shall be given you" (St. Matt. vii. 7). Seek, and it shall be given you ; therefore, as says St. Teresa, he who seeks not does not receive. Hence it is a common opinion of the holy Fathers, with St. Thomas, that without prayer it is impossible to persevere in the grace of God, and to save oneself. But he who prays is sure of the help of God ; we have His word for it, which cannot fail, repeated so often in the sacred Gospels : ' All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you' (St. Mark xi. 24). " Every one that asketh receiveth" (St. Luke xi. 10). " Amen, amen, I say unto you, if you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). God grants every thing that we ask Him for in the name of Jesus Christ. If, then, we wish to be saved, we must pray, and pray with humility and confidence, and above all with perseverance. And this is why mental prayer is so useful, because then we remember to pray ; otherwise we forget it, and so are lost. St. Teresa says, that out of her desire of seeing every one saved, she would have wished to go to the top of a mountain and then to cry out, so as to be heard by all men, nothing but these words, ' Pray ! pray !' The ancient fathers of the desert in their conferences decided that there was no better means of saving ourselves than by continually repeating the prayer of David : " Incline unto my aid, O God ! O Lord, make haste to help me !" So let us also try to say. Or else let us make use of the beautiful ejaculation of the Blessed F. Leonard of Porto-Maurizio : ' My Jesus, mercy !' And the two principal graces which we must always ask for (as I have said before), are the love of God and holy perseverance. We must always ask the same graces from the most holy Mary, who is called the dispenser of all the Divine graces ; and when we pray to her, she certainly obtains them for us from God. Therefore does St. Bernard thus exhort us : ' Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary ; for what she seeks she finds, and she cannot be disappointed.'

CHAPTER II.

DEVOUT EXERCISES TO BE PRACTISED.

§ 1. *Acts on rising in the morning.*

MAKE the sign of the cross, and then say : 1. My God, I adore Thee and love Thee with all my heart. 2. I thank Thee for all Thy benefits, and especially for having preserved me this night. 3. I offer Thee whatever I may do or suffer this day, in union with the actions and sufferings of Jesus and of Mary, with the intention of gaining all the indulgences I can. 4. I resolve to fly from all sin this day, and especially such a one—(*it is good to make a resolution, particularly about the fault into which we fall the oftenest*);—and I beg of Thee to give me perseverance for the love of Jesus Christ. I resolve to conform myself to Thy holy will, and particularly in those things which are contrary to my inclination, saying always : Lord, Thy will be done.

My Jesus, keep Thy hand over me this day ! Most holy Mary, take me beneath thy mantle. And do Thou, Eternal Father, help me, for the love of Jesus and Mary ! O my angel guardian and my patron saints, assist me. An *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary* and the *Creed*, with three *Hail Marys* in honour of the purity of Mary.

When you begin any work or study, say : Lord, I offer Thee this work. When you eat : My God, bless this food and me, that I may commit no fault about it ; and may all be for Thy glory. After having eaten : I thank Thee, Lord, for having done good to one who was Thine enemy. When the clock strikes : My Jesus, I love Thee ; never permit me to offend Thee again, and let me never be separated from Thee. In adverse circumstances : Lord, since Thou hast so willed it, I will it also. In time of temptation often repeat : Jesus and Mary ! When you know or doubt of some fault or sin you have committed, say immediately : My God, I repent of having offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness ; I will do so no more. And if it was a grievous sin, confess it directly.

It would be a good thing for parents, and masters, and mistresses, to make the children under them learn these acts by heart, that they may make use of them afterwards throughout their whole life.

§ 2. *Method of making mental prayer.*

Mental prayer consists of three parts ; the *preparation*, *meditation*, and the *conclusion*. The *preparation* consists of three acts : one of *faith* in the presence of God ; of *humility*, with a short act of contrition ; and of *prayer to be enlightened* : saying as follows, for the 1st : *My God, I believe that Thou art present with me, and I adore Thee with all the affection, of my soul.* For the 2d : *O Lord, by my sins I deserve to be now in hell ; I repent, O Infinite Goodness, with my whole heart, of having offended Thee.* For the 3d : *My God, for the love of Jesus and Mary, give me light in this prayer, that I may profit by it.* Then say a *Hail Mary* to the most blessed Virgin, that she may obtain light for us ; and a *Glory be to the Father*, to St. Joseph, to your guardian angel, and to your patron saint, for the same end. These acts should be made with attention, but briefly ; and then you go on directly to the meditation.

In the *meditation* you can always make use of some book, at least at the commencement, and stop where you find yourself most touched. St. Francis of Sales says, that in this we should do as the bees, which stop on a flower as long as they find any honey on it, and then pass on to another. It should also be observed, that the fruits to be gained by meditation are three in number : *to make affections, to pray, and to make resolutions* ; and in these consists the profit to be derived from mental prayer. After then you have meditated on some eternal truth, and God has spoken to your heart, you must also speak to God ; and first, by forming *affections*, be they acts of faith, of thanksgiving, of humility, or of hope ; but above all, repeat the acts of love and contrition. St. Thomas says, that every act of love merits for us the grace of God and paradise : 'Every act of love merits eternal life.' Each act of contrition obtains the same thing. Acts of love are such as these : *My God, I love Thee above all things ! I love Thee with all my heart ! I desire to do Thy will in all things. I rejoice that Thou art infinitely happy !* and the like. For an act of contrition it is enough to say : *O Infinite Goodness, I repent of having offended Thee !*

In the second place, you must *pray*; ask God to enlighten you, to give you humility or other virtues, to grant you a good death and eternal salvation; but above all, His love and holy perseverance. And when the soul is in great aridity, it is sufficient to repeat: *My God, help me! Lord, have mercy on me! My Jesus, have mercy!* and if you do nothing but this, your prayer will succeed exceedingly well.

In the third place, before finishing your prayer, you must form a particular resolution; as, for instance, to avoid some occasion of sin, to bear with an annoyance from some person, to correct some fault, and the like.

Finally, in the *conclusion*, three acts are to be made: in the 1st, we must thank God for the inspirations we have received; in the 2d, we must make a determination to observe the resolutions we have made; in the 3d, we must ask God, for the love of Jesus and Mary, to help us to keep our purpose. The prayer concludes by the recommendation of the souls in purgatory, the prelates of the Church, sinners, and all our relations and friends, for which we may say an *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary*. St. Francis of Sales exhorts us to choose some thought which may have struck us more especially in our prayer, that we may remember it during the rest of the day.

Benedict XIV. granted seven years' indulgence to those who make half an hour's mental prayer during the day, and a plenary indulgence if it is made every day for a month, on the condition of confession and communion.

§ 3. *Acts to be made by way of preparation and thanksgiving both for Confession and Communion.*

Before confessing, the penitent should beg for light from God to enable him to know what sins he has committed, and to obtain the grace of a true sorrow and purpose of amendment. He should also particularly recommend himself to Our Lady of Sorrows, that she may obtain contrition for him. Then he may make the following acts:

Act before Confession.

O God of infinite majesty, behold at Thy feet a traitor, who has offended thee over and over again, but who now humbly seeks forgiveness. O Lord, reject me not; Thou dost not despise a heart that humbles itself: "A contrite

and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. l. 19). I thank Thee that Thou hast waited for me till now, and hast not let me die in sin, casting me into hell, as I deserved. Since Thou hast waited for me, my God, I hope that, by the merits of Jesus Christ, Thou wilt pardon me in this confession for all the offences I have committed against Thee; I repent, and am sorry for them, because by them I have merited hell and lost paradise. But above all, it is not so much on account of hell which I have merited, but because I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness, that I am sorry from the bottom of my heart. I love Thee, O Sovereign Good; and because I love Thee, I repent of all the insults I have offered Thee. I have turned my back upon Thee; I have not respected Thee; I have despised Thy grace and Thy friendship. O Lord, I have lost thee by my own free-will; forgive me all my sins for the love of Jesus Christ, now that I repent with all my heart; I hate, detest, and abominate them above every ill. And I repent not only of mortal sins, but also of venial sins, because these are also displeasing to Thee. I resolve for the future, by Thy grace, never more willingly to offend Thee. Yes, my God, I will rather die than ever sin again.

And if a person confesses a sin into which he has often relapsed, it is a good thing to resolve particularly not to fall into it again, by promising to avoid the occasion of it, and to take the means pointed out by the confessor, or such as he may himself judge to be most efficacious for correcting himself of it.

Act after confession.

My dear Jesus, how much do I not owe Thee! By the merits of Thy blood I hope that I have this day been pardoned. I thank Thee above all things. I hope to reach heaven, where I shall praise Thy mercies for ever. My God, if I have hitherto lost Thee so often, I now desire to lose Thee no more. From this day forward I will change my life in earnest. Thou dost merit all my love; I will love Thee truly; I will no longer see myself separated from Thee. I have promised Thee this already; now I repeat my promise of being ready to die rather than offend Thee again. I promise also to avoid all occasions of sin; and to

take such means as shall prevent my falling again. My Jesus, Thou knowest my weakness, give me grace to be faithful to Thee till death, and to have recourse to Thee when I am tempted. Most holy Mary, help me ! Thou art the mother of perseverance ; I place my hope in thee.

Preparation for Communion.

There is no means more efficacious in freeing us from our sins, and in enabling us to advance in the love of God, than the holy Communion. Why is it, then, that some souls find themselves always in the same tepidity, and committing the same faults, notwithstanding the many communions they make ? This happens through the want of a proper disposition and preparation. Two things are requisite for this preparation. The first is to disengage our heart from all affections which are an impediment to the Divine love. The second is to have a great desire to love God. And this, says St. Francis of Sales, should be our chief intention when we communicate, namely, to increase in Divine love. Out of love alone, says the saint, ought our God to be received, who out of love alone gives Himself to us. For this end let us make the following acts.

Acts before Communion.

My beloved Jesus, true Son of God, who didst die for me on the cross in a sea of sorrows and ignominy, I firmly believe that Thou art present in the most holy Sacrament ; and for this faith I am ready to give my life.

My dear Redeemer, I hope by Thy goodness, and through the merits of Thy blood, that when Thou dost come to me this morning, Thou wilt inflame me with Thy holy love, and wilt give me all those graces which I need to keep me obedient and faithful to Thee till death.

Ah, my God, true and only Lover of my soul, what couldst Thou do more to oblige me to love Thee ? Thou wert not satisfied, my Love, with dying for me, but Thou wouldst also institute the most holy Sacrament, making Thyself my food, and giving Thyself all to me ; thus uniting Thyself most closely to such a miserable and ungrateful creature. Thou dost Thyself invite me to receive Thee, and dost greatly desire that I should receive Thee. O infinite Love ! A God gives Himself all to me ! O my God, O infinite Love, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee above all things ; I love Thee with all my heart ; I love Thee more than myself, more than my life ; I love Thee because Thou art worthy of being loved ; and I love Thee also to

please Thee, since Thou dost desire my love ! Depart from my soul, all ye earthly affections ; to Thee alone, my Jesus, my Treasure, my All, will I give all my love. This morning Thou dost give Thyself all to me, and I give myself all to Thee. Permit me to love Thee ; for I desire none but Thee, and nothing but what is pleasing to Thee. I love Thee, O my Saviour, and I unite my poor love to the love of all the angels and saints, and of Thy Mother Mary, and the love of Thy Eternal Father ! Oh, that I could see Thee loved by all ! Oh, that I could make Thee loved by all men, and loved as much as Thou dost deserve !

Behold, O my Jesus, I am now about to draw near to feed on Thy most sacred Flesh ! Ah, my God, who am I ? and who art Thou ? Thou art a Lord of infinite goodness, and I am a loathsome worm, defiled by so many sins, and who have driven Thee out of my soul so often.

Domine, non sum dignus. Lord, I am not worthy to remain in Thy presenee ; I ought to be in hell for ever, far away, and abandoned by Thee. But out of Thy goodness Thou callest me to receive Thee : behold, I come, I come humbled and in confusion for the great displeasure I have given Thee, but trusting entirely to Thy merey and to the love Thou hast for me. I am exceedingly sorry, O my loving Redeemer, for having so often offended Thee in time past ! Thou didst even give Thy life for me ; and I have so often despised Thy grace and Thy love, and have exchanged Thee for nothing. I repent, and am sorry with all my heart for every offence which I have offered Thee, whether grievous or light, because it was an offence against Thee, who art infinite goodness. I hope Thou hast already pardoned me ; but if Thou hast not yet forgiven me, pardon me, my Jesus, before I receive Thee. Ah, receive me quickly into Thy grace, since it is Thy will soon to come and dwell within me.

Come, then, my Jesus, come into my soul, which sighs after Thee. My only and infinite Good, my Life, my Love, my All, I would desire to receive Thee this morning with the same love with which those souls who love Thee most have received Thee, and with the same fervour with which

Thy most holy Mother received Thee ; to her communions I wish to unite this one of mine. O Blessed Virgin, and my Mother Mary, give me Thy Son ; I intend to receive Him from thy hands ! Tell Him that I am thy servant, and thus will He press me more lovingly to His heart, now that He is coming to me.

Acts after Communion.

The time after communion is a precious time for gaining treasures of grace, because the acts and prayers made whilst the soul is thus united to Jesus Christ have more merit, and are of more value, than when they are made at any other time. St. Teresa says, that our Lord then dwells in the soul enthroned as on a mercy-seat, and speaks to it in these words : My child, ask of Me what you will ; for this end am I come to you to do you good. Oh, what great favours do those receive who converse with Jesus Christ after communion ! The Ven. F. Avila never omitted to remain two hours in prayer after communion ; and St. Aloysius Gonzaga continued his thanksgiving for three days. Let the communicant, then, make the following acts, and try during the rest of the day to go on making acts of love and prayer, in order to keep himself united to Jesus Christ, whom he has received in the morning.

Behold, my Jesus, Thou art come, Thou art now within me, and hast made Thyself all mine. Be Thou welcome, my Beloved Redeemer. I adore Thee, and cast myself at Thy feet ; I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart, and thank Thee for that Thou hast deigned to enter into my breast. O Mary, O my patron saints, O my guardian angel, do you all thank Him for me ! Since then, O my Divine King, Thou art come to visit me with so much love, I give Thee my will, my liberty, and my whole self. Thou hast given Thyself all to me, I will give myself all to Thee ; I will no longer belong to myself ; from this day forward I will be Thine, and altogether Thine. I desire that my soul, my body, my faculties, my senses, should be all Thine, that they may be employed in serving and pleasing Thee. To Thee I consecrate all my thoughts, my desires, my affections, and all my life. I have offended Thee enough, my Jesus ; I desire to spend the remainder of my life in loving Thee, who hast loved me so much.

Accept, O God of my soul, the sacrifice which I, a miserable sinner, make to Thee, and who desires only to love and please Thee. Work Thou in me, and dispose of me,

and of all things belonging to me, as Thou pleasest. May Thy love destroy in me all those affections which are displeasing to Thee, that I may be all Thine, and may live only to please Thee !

I ask Thee not for goods of this world, for pleasures, for honours ; give me, I pray Thee, by the merits of Thy Passion, O my Jesus, a constant sorrow for my sins ! Enlighten me, and make me know the vanity of worldly goods, and how much Thou dost deserve to be loved. Separate me from all attachment to the world, and bind me entirely to Thy love, that from henceforth my will may neither seek nor desire any thing but what Thou willest. Give me patience and resignation in infirmities, in poverty, and in all those things which are contrary to my self-love. Make me gentle towards those who despise me. Give me a holy death. Give me Thy holy love. And, above all, I pray Thee to give me perseverance in Thy grace till death ; never permit me to separate myself from Thee again : *Jesu dulcissime, ne permittas me separari a Te*. And I also ask of Thee the grace always to have recourse to Thee, and to invoke Thy aid, O my Jesus, in all my temptations ; and the grace to ask Thee always for holy perseverance.

O Eternal Father, Thy Son Jesus Christ has promised me that Thou wilt grant me every thing that I shall ask Thee in His name : "If you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). In the name, therefore, and by the merits of this Son, I ask for Thy love and holy perseverance, that I may one day love Thee in heaven with all my strength, and sing Thy mercies for ever, secure of never more being separated from Thee.

O most holy Mary, my mother and my hope, obtain for me these graces which I so desire ; as also a great love for thee, my Queen : may I always recommend myself to thee in all my necessities !

§ 4. Method of hearing Mass

The same action is performed in the Mass as was accomplished on Calvary ; except that there the blood of Jesus Christ was really shed, while on the altar it is shed mystically ; but in the Mass the merits of the passion of Jesus are applied to each one in particular. To

hear Mass, therefore, with great fruit, we must pay attention to the ends for which it was instituted, namely: 1. To honour God. 2. To thank Him for His benefits. 3. To satisfy for our sins. 4. To obtain graces. For this reason you may use the following prayer during Mass.

Eternal Father, in this Sacrifice I offer to Thee Thy Son Jesus, with all the merits of His Passion: 1. In honour of Thy majesty. 2. In thanksgiving for all the favours Thou hast hitherto shown me, and for all those which I hope to receive for all eternity. 3. In satisfaction for my sins, and for those of all the living and dead. 4. To obtain eternal salvation, and all the graces which are necessary for me to gain it.

At the elevation of the Host: My God, for the love of this Thy Son, pardon me and give me holy perseverance. *At the elevation of the Chalice:* By the Blood of Jesus, give me Thy love and a holy death. *At the communion of the priest make a spiritual communion, saying:* My Jesus, I love Thee, and desire to possess Thee. I embrace Thee, and I will never more separate myself from Thee.

§ 5. *Acts to be made in visiting the most holy Sacrament and the Divine Mother.*

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the love Thou bearest to mankind, dost remain night and day in this Sacrament, full of pity and love, awaiting, calling, and receiving all who come to visit Thee; I believe that Thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar; I adore Thee from the depths of my own nothingness; I thank Thee for the many graces Thou hast given me, and especially for having given me Thyself in this Sacrament; for having given me Mary Thy Mother as my advocate, and for having called me to visit Thee in this church. I salute Thy most amiable and most loving Heart; and I do so, first, in thanksgiving for this great gift; secondly, to atone for all the insults Thou hast received in this Sacrament from all infidels, heretics, and bad Catholics; thirdly, I intend in this visit to adore Thee in all those places where Thou, thus veiled in the most holy Sacrament, art least revered and most abandoned. My Jesus, I love Thee with my

whole heart. I am sorry that I have hitherto so often offended Thy infinite goodness. With the help of Thy grace, I resolve to displease Thee no more; and, unworthy as I am, I now consecrate myself wholly to Thee; I renounce and give to Thee my will, my affections, my desires, and all that is mine. Henceforward do with me, and all that belongs to me, whatsoever Thou pleasest. I ask for nothing but Thee and Thy holy love, final perseverance, and a perfect fulfilment of Thy will. I recommend to Thee the souls in purgatory, especially those who were most devout to this most holy Sacrament, and to most holy Mary. I also recommend to Thee all poor sinners. And lastly, my beloved Saviour, I unite all my affections with Those of Thy most loving Heart; and thus united, I offer them to Thy Eternal Father; and in Thy name I beseech Him to accept and grant them.

On visiting any image of the ever-blessed Virgin.

Most holy immaculate Virgin Mary, my Mother, I, the most miserable of sinners, have this day recourse to thee, the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the universe, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners! I worship thee, O great Queen, and I thank thee for the many favours thou hast hitherto obtained for me; especially for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Lady, worthy of all love! and for the love I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always, and to do every thing in my power to make others serve thee also. In thee do I hope; I place my salvation in thy hands. Accept me for thy servant, receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of Mercy! Thou art all-powerful with God; free me, then, from all temptations, or at least obtain for me strength to conquer them as long as I live. From thee I beg a true love of Jesus Christ; and by thy help I hope for a good death. I beseech thee, Mother, by the love thou bearest to God, that thou wilt always help me, but especially at the last moment of my life. Leave me not till thou shalt see me safe in heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen. This is my hope. So may it be.

§ 6. *Christian acts, to be made in the evening before going to bed.*

Before going to rest, make your examination of conscience in the following manner: First thank God for all the favours you have received; then cast a glance over all the actions you have done, and the words you have spoken, during the day, repenting of all the faults you have committed. Afterwards make the Christian acts in the following manner.

Act of Faith.

O my God, who art infallible truth, because Thou hast revealed it to Thy Church, I believe all that she proposes to my belief! I believe that Thou art my God, the Creator of all things; that Thou dost reward the just with an eternal paradise, and dost punish the wicked in hell for all eternity. I believe that Thou art one in essence, and three in persons, namely, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe in the Incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. I believe, in fine, all that the Holy Church believes. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian; and I protest that I will live and die in this holy faith.

Act of hope.

O my God, confiding in Thy promises, because Thou art powerful, faithful, and merciful, I hope through the merits of Jesus Christ to obtain pardon of my sins, final perseverance, and the glory of paradise.

Act of love and contrition.

O my God, because Thou art infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with all my heart above all things; and for the love of Thee I love my neighbour also. I repent with all my heart, and am sorry above all things for all my sins, because by them I have offended Thy infinite goodness. I resolve, by the help of Thy grace, which I beseech Thee to grant me now and always, rather to die than ever to offend Thee again. I propose, also, to receive the holy Sacraments during my life, and at the hour of my death.

It is well to know, that to those who make these Christian acts with the desire of receiving the holy Sacraments during their life and at their death, Benedict XIII. granted seven years' indulgence; and a plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in purgatory, when they are said regularly for a month; as also a plenary indulgence in *arti-*

culo mortis. Besides, by a concession of Benedict XIV., the indulgence may be gained several times a day by any one who recites the above acts, provided he does so with the intention of gaining the indulgence.

Conclude the whole by saying the rosary and the litanies of the Blessed Virgin.

Devout acts to be made every day.

I adore Thee, my God, most holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons and one only God !

I humble myself in the abyss of my nothingness to the will of Thy infinite majesty.

I firmly believe all that Thou hast deigned to make known to me by means of the holy Scripture and Thy holy Church, because Thou hast said it; and I am ready to give my life a thousand times for this faith.

I place all my hope in Thee. Whatever good I may have, whether spiritual or temporal, either in this life or in the next, I hope for from Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ, O God, my life and my only hope !

I love Thee, Infinite Goodness, with all the affection of my heart and of my soul, because Thou dost merit all my love. I wish I knew how to love Thee as the angels, the saints, and just men love Thee. I unite my imperfect love with that which all the saints, most holy Mary, and Jesus Christ, bear to Thee.

My God, because Thou art the supreme good, infinitely worthy of being loved and served, I am sorry and repent of all my sins, detesting them as much as possible above every other evil. I resolve for the future rather to die than to consent to any thing that may give Thee the slightest displeasure.

I offer Thee now and for ever my body, my soul, and all my senses and faculties, my memory, my understanding, and my will. Do with me, Lord, and with all that belongs to me, what Thou pleasest. Give me Thy love and final perseveranee, and grant that in all temptations I may always have recourse to Thee.

I resolve to employ myself entirely in those things which are pleasing to Thee, being ready to suffer any pain and labour in order to please Thee, saying always: Lord, may Thy will be done !

I desire that all should serve and love Thee. I would gladly spend my time in persuading all mankind to love and honour Thy Majesty.

I offer to Thy Majesty all the works I shall ever do, steeping them in the blood of Jesus, my Redeemer.

I intend to gain all the indulgences I can in my actions this day, and to apply them by way of suffrage to the souls in purgatory.

I recommend to Thee all the souls in purgatory, as also all sinners; enlighten and strengthen these unhappy creatures, that they may know and love Thee.

I rejoice exceedingly that Thy happiness is infinite, and will never have an end.

I thank Thee for all the graces and benefits which Thou hast bestowed upon all mankind, but especially upon me, who have been more ungrateful than others.

My beloved Jesus, I take refuge within Thy sacred wounds: do Thou there defend me this day, and for ever, from all temptations, till Thou shalt grant me to see Thee and love Thee eternally in paradise. Amen. This is my hope, and so may it be.

§ 7. *Devout prayers to Jesus and Mary to obtain the graces necessary for salvation.*

Prayer to Jesus Christ, to obtain His holy love.

My crucified Jesus, I confess Thee to be the true Son of God and my Saviour. I adore and thank Thee for the death Thou didst suffer for me. My dear Redeemer, if I have hitherto done nothing but offend Thee, I am now sorry for it above all things, and I desire nothing but to love Thee. Thou hast promised to hear those who pray to Thee; by the merits of Thy passion, I ask Thee to give me Thy holy love. Ah, draw my heart entirely to Thyself, that from this day forward I may love Thee with all my strength, and may love none other but Thee; and so may I one day come to love Thee for all eternity in paradise.

Prayer to obtain final perseverance.

O sovereign and eternal God, I thank Thee for having created me; for having redeemed me by means of Jesus

Christ; for having made me a Christian by calling me to the true faith, and giving me time to repent after the many sins I have committed. O Infinite Goodness, I love Thee above all things; and I repent with all my heart of all my offences against Thee. I hope Thou hast already pardoned me; but I am continually in danger of again offending Thee. For the love of Jesus Christ, I beg of Thee holy perseverance till death. Thou knowest my weakness; help me, then, and permit me not ever again to separate myself from Thee. Rather let me die a thousand times, than ever again to lose Thy grace. O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me holy perseverance!

Another prayer to obtain final perseverance.

Eternal Father, I humbly adore and thank Thee for having created me, and for having redeemed me by means of Jesus Christ. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian by giving me the true faith, and by adopting me for Thy child in holy baptism. I thank Thee for having given me time for repentance after my many sins, and for having (as I hope) pardoned all my offences against Thee. I renew my sorrow for them, because I have displeased Thee. O Infinite Goodness! I thank Thee also for having preserved me from falling again, as often as I should have done, if Thou hadst not held me up and saved me. But my enemies do not cease to fight against me, nor will they until death, that they may again have me for their slave; if Thou dost not keep and help me continually by Thine assistance, I shall be wretched enough to lose Thy grace anew. I therefore pray Thee, for the love of Jesus Christ, to grant me holy perseverance till death. Thy Son Jesus has promised that Thou wilt grant us whatever we ask for in His name. By the merits then of Jesus Christ, I beg of Thee for myself, and for all those who are in Thy grace, the grace of never more being separated from Thy love, but that we may always love Thee in this life and in the next. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

The same prayer to obtain final perseverance.

Eternal God, I adore and thank Thee for having created and redeemed me by means of Jesus Christ; for having

made me a child of Thy holy Church ; for having waited for me when I was in sin ; for having pardoned me so often, and preserved me from many faults, into which I should have fallen again, if Thou hadst not helped me by Thy grace. But my enemies will not cease tempting me till death ; if Thou dost not assist me, I shall offend Thee more than before. For the love of Jesus Christ, give me holy perseverance. Jesus Christ has promised that Thou wilt grant us all those graces which we ask for in His name ; by the merits then of this Thy Son, I beg of Thee the grace never more to separate myself from Thee : *ne permittas me separari a Te*. And this grace I also ask for all who are now in Thy friendship. I know certainly that if I continue to ask for perseverance, I shall obtain it, because Thou hast promised to hear those who pray to Thee ; my only fear is, that I shall omit on some occasion to recommend myself to Thee, and so I shall be lost. I therefore beseech Thee to give me this grace in the name of Jesus and Mary. Thus, my God, do I certainly hope to die in Thy grace, and to come and love Thee in paradise, where I shall be secure of never more being separated from Thee, and shall love Thee for all eternity. Amen.

Prayer to Jesus Christ, to obtain His holy love.

My crucified Love, my dear Jesus ! I believe in Thee, and confess Thee to be the true Son of God and my Saviour. I adore Thee from the abyss of my own nothingness, and I thank Thee for the death Thou didst suffer for me, that I might obtain the life of Divine grace. My beloved Redeemer, to Thee I owe all my salvation. Through Thee I have hitherto escaped hell ; through Thee have I received the pardon of my sins. But I am so ungrateful, that, instead of loving Thee, I have repeated my offences against Thee. I deserve to be condemned, so as not to be able to love Thee any more : but no, my Jesus, punish me in any other way, but not in this. If I have not loved Thee in time past, I love Thee now ; and I desire nothing **but** to love Thee with all my heart. But without Thy help I can do nothing. Since Thou dost command me to love Thee, give me also the strength to fulfil this Thy sweet

and loving precept. Thou hast promised to grant all that we ask of Thee : " You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you " (St. John xv. 7). Confiding, then, in this promise, my dear Jesus, I ask, first of all, pardon of all my sins ; and I repent above all things, because I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness ! I ask for holy perseverance in Thy grace till my death. But, above all, I ask for the gift of Thy holy love. Ah, my Jesus, my Hope, my Love, my All, inflame me with that love which Thou didst come on earth to enkindle ! *Tui amoris in me ignem accende.* For this end, make me always live in conformity with Thy holy will. Enlighten me, that I may understand more and more how worthy Thou art of our love, and that I may know the immense love Thou hast borne me, especially in giving Thy life for me. Grant, then, that I may love Thee with all my heart, and may love Thee always, and never cease to beg of Thee the grace to love Thee in this life ; that living always, and dying in Thy love, I may come one day to love Thee with all my strength in heaven, never to leave off loving Thee for all eternity.

O Mother of beautiful love, my advocate and refuge, Mary, who art of all creatures the most beautiful, the most loving, and the most beloved of God, and whose only desire it is to see Him loved ! ah, by the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace to love Him always, and with all my heart ! This I ask and hope for from thee. Amen.

The same prayer, to be said every day to Jesus Christ, to obtain His holy love.

My crucified Love, and my most sweet Jesus, I believe in Thee, and confess Thee to be true Son of God and Saviour of the world ! I adore Thee from the abyss of my misery, and thank Thee for the death which Thou didst suffer, to obtain for me the life of Divine grace. O most faithful of all friends ! O most loving of all fathers ! O kindest of all masters ! my beloved Redeemer, to Thee I am indebted for my salvation, for my soul, my body, and my whole self. Thou hast delivered me from hell ; through

Thee I have received the pardon of my sins ; through Thee do I hope for paradise. But my ingratitude is so great, that instead of loving Thee, after so many mercies and special endearments of love, I have only offended Thee afresh. I confess that I deserve not to be allowed to love Thee any more. But no, my Jesus, choose some other punishment for me, and not this. If I have despised Thee up to this time, now I love Thee, and I desire to love Thee with all my heart. Thou knowest very well, that without Thy help I can do nothing. Since, then, Thou dost command me to love Thee, and dost offer me Thy grace, provided I ask it in Thy name, confiding in Thy goodness, and in the promise Thou hast made me, saying : " Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that I will do " (St. John xiv. 13),—I present myself, poor as I am, before the throne of Thy mercy ; and by the merits of Thy passion, I ask Thee first to pardon all my sins, of which I repent with all my soul, because by them I have offended Thee, who art infinite goodness. Pardon me, then, and at the same time, give me holy perseveranee till death ; grant me also the gift of Thy holy love.

Ah, my Jesus, my Hope, and my only Love ! my Life, my Treasure, my All ! shed over my soul that light of truth, and that fire of love, which Thou didst come to bring into the world. Enlighten me to know every day better why Thou shouldst be loved, and to see the immense love Thou hast shown me in suffering and dying for me. Ah, grant that the same love may be in me as that with which Thy eternal Father loves Thee. And as He is in Thee, and is one with Thee, so may I, by means of a true love, be in Thee, and by a perfect union of will, become one with Thee. Grant me, then, O my Jesus, the grace of loving Thee with all my affections, that I may love Thee always, and ever beg the grace to love Thee ; so that, ending my life in Thy love, I may come to love Thee in heaven with a purer and more perfect love, never to cease loving Thee, and to possess Thee for all eternity !

O Mother of beautiful love, most blessed Virgin, my advocate, my mother, my hope after Jesus,—who art of all creatures the most loving towards God, and desirest

nothing but that He should be loved by all,—ah, for the love of this Son dying before thine eyes for my salvation, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace to love Him always, and with all my heart ! I ask it of thee, and from thee do I hope to obtain it. Amen.

Prayer to obtain confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ and in the intercession of Mary.

Eternal Father, I thank Thee for myself, and on behalf of all mankind, for the great mercy that Thou hast shown us, in sending Thy Son to be made man, and to die to obtain our salvation ; I thank Thee for it, and I should wish to offer Thee in thanksgiving all that love which is due for such an inestimable benefit. By His merits our sins are pardoned, and Thy justice is satisfied for the punishment we had merited ; by these merits Thou dost receive us miserable sinners into Thy grace, while we deserve nothing but hatred and chastisement : Thou dost receive men to reign in Paradise. Finally, Thou hast bound Thyself, in consideration of these merits, to grant all gifts and graces to those who ask for them in the name of Jesus Christ.

I thank Thee also, O Infinite Goodness, that, in order to strengthen our confidence, besides giving us Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, Thou hast also given us Thy beloved daughter Mary as our advocate ; so that, with that heart full of mercy which Thou hast given her, she may never cease to succour by her intercession any sinner who may have recourse to her ; and this intercession is so powerful with Thee, that Thou canst not deny her any grace which she asks of Thee.

Hence it is Thy will that we should have a great confidence in the merits of Jesus, and in the intercession of Mary. But this confidence is Thy gift, and it is a great gift which Thou dost grant to those only who ask Thee for it. This confidence, then, in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in the patronage of Mary, I beg of Thee, through the merits of Jesus and Mary. To Thee, also, my dear Redeemer, do I turn ; it was to obtain for me this confidence in Thy merits that Thou didst sacrifice Thy life on the

cross for me, who was worthy only of punishment. Accomplish, then, the end for which Thou hast died ; enable me to hope for all things, through confidence in Thy passion. And you, O Mary, my Mother, and my hope after Jesus, obtain for me a firm confidence, first in the merits of Jesus thy Son, and then in the intercession of your prayers,—prayers which are all-powerful in gaining all they ask ! O my beloved Jesus ! O sweet Mary ! I trust in you, to you do I give my soul ; you have loved it so much, have pity on it, and save it.

Prayer to obtain the grace of being constant in prayer.

O God of my soul, I hope in Thy goodness that Thou hast pardoned all my offences against Thee, and that I am now in a state of grace. I thank Thee for it with all my heart, and I hope to thank Thee for all eternity : *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo*. I know that I have fallen, because I have not had recourse to Thee when I was tempted, to ask for holy perseverance. For the future, I firmly resolve to recommend myself always to Thee, and especially when I see myself in danger of again offending Thee. I will always fly to Thy mercy, invoking always the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, with full confidence that when I pray Thou wilt not fail to give me the strength which I have not of myself to resist my enemies. This I resolve and promise to do. But of what use, O my God, will all these resolutions and promises be, if Thou dost not assist me with Thy grace to put them in practice, that is, to have recourse to Thee in all dangers ? Ah, Eternal Father ! help me, for the love of Jesus Christ ; and let me never omit recommending myself to Thee whenever I am tempted. I know that Thou dost always help me when I have recourse to Thee ; but my fear is, that I should forget to recommend myself to Thee, and so my negligence will be the cause of my ruin, that is, the loss of Thy grace, the greatest evil that can happen to me. Ah, by the merits of Jesus Christ, give me grace to pray to Thee ; but grant me such an abundant grace that I may always pray, and pray as I ought ! O my Mother Mary, whenever I have had recourse to thee, thou hast obtained

for me the help which has kept me from falling ! Now I come to beg of thee to obtain a still greater grace, namely, that of recommending myself always to thy Son and to thee in all my necessities. My Queen, thou obtainest all thou dost desire from God by the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ ; obtain for me now this grace which I beg of thee, namely, to pray always, and never to cease praying till I die. Amen.

Prayer to be said every day, to obtain the graces necessary for salvation.

Eternal Father, Thy Son has promised that Thou wilt grant us all the graces which we ask Thee for in His name. In the name, therefore, and by the merits of Jesus Christ, I ask the following graces for myself and for all mankind. And first, I pray Thee to give me a lively faith in all that the holy Roman Church teaches me. Enlighten me also, that I may know the vanity of the goods of this world, and the immensity of the infinite good that Thou art ; make me also see the deformity of the sins I have committed, that I may humble myself and detest them as I ought ; and, on the other hand, show me how worthy Thou art by reason of Thy goodness, that I should love Thee with all my heart. Make me know also the love Thou hast borne me, that from this day forward I may try to be grateful for so much goodness. Secondly, give me a firm confidence in Thy mercy of receiving the pardon of my sins, holy perseverance, and finally, the glory of paradise, through the merits of Jesus Christ and the intercession of Mary. Thirdly, give me a great love towards Thee, which shall detach me from the love of this world and of myself, so that I may love none other but Thee, and that I may neither do nor desire any thing else but what is for Thy glory. Fourthly, I beg of Thee a perfect resignation to Thy will, in accepting with tranquillity sorrows, infirmities, contempt, persecutions, aridity of spirit, loss of property, of esteem, of relations, and every other cross which shall come to me from Thy hands. I offer myself entirely to Thee, that Thou mayest do with me and all that belongs to me what Thou pleasest ; do Thou only give me light and strength to do Thy will ; and especially at the

hour of death help me to sacrifice my life to Thee with all the affection I am capable of, in union with the sacrifice which Thy Son Jesus Christ made of His life on the Cross on Calvary. Fifthly, I beg of Thee a great sorrow for my sins, which may make me grieve over them as long as I live, and weep for the insults I have offered Thee, the Sovereign Good, who art worthy of infinite love, and who hast loved me so much. Sixthly, I pray Thee to give me the spirit of true humility and meekness, that I may accept with peace, and even with joy, all the contempt, ingratitude and ill-treatment that I may receive. At the same time I also pray Thee to give me perfect charity, which shall make me wish well to those who have done evil to me, and to do what good I can, at least by praying, for those who have in any way injured me. Seventhly, I beg of Thee to give me a love for the virtue of holy mortification, by which I may chastise my rebellious senses, and cross my self-love; at the same time, I beg Thee to give me holy purity of body, and the grace to resist all bad temptations, by ever having recourse to Thee and Thy most holy Mother. Give me grace faithfully to obey my spiritual father and all my superiors in all things. Give me an upright intention, that in all I desire and do I may seek only Thy glory, and to please Thee alone. Give me a great confidence in the Passion of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of Mary immaculate. Give me a great love towards the most Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, and a tender devotion and love to Thy holy Mother. Give me, I pray Thee, above all, holy perseverance, and the grace always to pray for it, especially in time of temptation and at the hour of death.

Lastly, I recommend to Thee the holy souls of Purgatory, my relations and benefactors; and in an especial manner I recommend to Thee all those who hate me or who have in any way offended me; I beg of Thee to render them good for the evil they have done, or may wish to do me. Finally, I recommend to Thee all infidels, heretics, and all poor sinners; give them light and strength to deliver themselves from sin. Oh, most loving God, make Thyself known and loved by all, but especially by those who have been

more ungrateful to Thee than others, so that by Thy goodness I may come one day to sing Thy mercies in paradise; for my hope is in the merits of Thy blood, and in the patronage of Mary. O Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me! So I hope; so may it be!

Prayer to obtain all holy virtues.

My Lord and my God, by the merits of Jesus Christ, I ask Thee first to enlighten me; make me know the vanity of the goods of this world, that there is no other good but to love Thee, the supreme and infinite good. Make me know my unworthiness, and how worthy Thou art of being loved by all, and especially by me for the love Thou hast borne me. Give me holy humility to embrace with cheerfulness all the contempt I may receive from men. Give me a great sorrow for my sins. Give me the love of holy mortification, that by it I may curb my passions, and punish my rebellious senses. Give me a love for the obedience I owe to my superiors. Give me grace to direct all I do to the sole end of pleasing Thee. Give me holy purity of mind and body, and a detachment from every thing that does not tend to the love of Thee. Give me a great confidence in the passion of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of the ever-blessed Mary. Give me above all a great love towards Thee, and a perfect conformity to Thy Divine will. I recommend to Thee also the souls of Purgatory, my relations, benefactors, and friends, and all those from whom I have received any affront or injury; I pray Thee shower down upon them all blessings. Finally, I recommend to Thee infidels, heretics, and all those who are in a state of sin. Since Thou, my God, art worthy of infinite love, make Thyself known and loved by all; but especially by me who have been most ungrateful to Thee. I have offended Thee enough; make me love Thee exceedingly, and bring me to Heaven, where I shall sing Thy mercies for all eternity. Blessed Mary, pray to Jesus for me! Amen.

Prayer of a devout soul to Mary and Jesus.

My Queen and my Mother, if thou protect me, I fear not that I shall go to hell; because thou dost interpose

thy prayers and thy merits for those whom thou dost protect, and Jesus Christ knows not how to deny any thing that thou dost ask Him. My dear Lady, for the love thou hast for thy Son, pray to Him, and have pity on me! And Thou, my Jesus, by the prayers and merits of Thy Mother, and by the blood which Thou hast shed for me, deliver me from hell; because in hell I cannot love Thee. From this hell I pray Thee to deliver me, by that compassion which forced Thee even to die on the cross for the love of me. Jesus and Mary, you are my love and my hope!

Prayer to be made every day to obtain holy perseverance.

My God, I thank Thee for having pardoned me, as I trust Thou hast, all the offences I have committed against Thee. I love Thee above all things; and I am more sorry for having despised Thy infinite majesty than for any other evil that has happened to me. I resolve rather to die than ever to offend Thee again; but I fear lest through my weakness I should fall again, and lose Thy grace. Ah, by the merits of Jesus Christ, never permit me to fall again under Thy displeasure! And Thou, Jesus my Redeemer, since Thou hast died on the cross to save me, never let me separate myself from Thee again. My Jesus, my Jesus, hear me! *Ne permittas me separari a Te; ne permittas me separare a Te.* Such is my hope in that blood which Thou hast shed for me with so much grief. And thou, Mary, my mother and my hope, pray for me; and when thou seest me assailed by any temptation, obtain for me that I may always have recourse immediately to thy Son and thee, saying, Help me, my Jesus; my mother, come to my aid, that I may not lose God; thus I hope to die loving God and thee, in order to love thee eternally in paradise.

Prayer to consecrate oneself to the Blessed Virgin.

Most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, I, N. N., although most unworthy of being thy servant, nevertheless, moved by thy wonderful compassion, and by a desire to serve thee, choose thee this day, in presence of my angel guardian, and of all the heavenly court, for my special lady, advocate, and mother; and I firmly resolve to serve thee

always, and to do every thing in my power to make others serve thee also. I beseech thee, then, most merciful mother, by the blood of thy Son, which was shed for me, to take me into the number of thy clients as thy servant for ever. Protect me in my actions, and obtain for me grace so to measure my thoughts, words, and works, that I may never offend thy most pure eyes, nor those of thy Divine Son Jesus. Remember me, and abandon me not at the hour of my death.

To most holy Mary, to obtain the forgiveness of our sins and holy perseverance.

Behold, O Mother of God, at thy feet a miserable sinner, who has recourse to thee, and trusts in thee! O Mother of Mercy, have pity on me! I hear thee called by all the refuge and the hope of sinners; thou art then my refuge and hope also. By thy intercession thou hast to save me. Help me for the love of Jesus Christ; lend thy hand to a fallen wretch, who recommends himself to thee, and who dedicates himself to thee as thy faithful servant. I offer myself then, O Queen of Heaven, to serve thee all my life; accept me, and reject me not, as I deserve. O my mother, in thy protection have I placed all my hopes. I bless and thank God a thousand times for having in His mercy given me this confidence in thee, which I consider as an earnest of my salvation. Ah, how many times have I not unhappily fallen because I had not recourse to thee! I hope now, that through the merits of Jesus Christ and thy prayers, these sins have been pardoned. I may still, notwithstanding, again lose the Divine grace. Do thou, my Lady, protect me; never let me again become the slave of hell. Help me always. By thy help I know I shall conquer; and I know that thou wilt surely assist me if I recommend myself to thee; but my fear is, that in the occasions of falling, I should omit to call upon thee, and so should be lost. This, then, is the grace I seek from thee, and which I beseech and conjure thee to obtain for me, namely, that in the assaults of hell I should always have recourse to thee, and say: Mary, help me! help me, O Mary, my mother, permit me not to lose my God!

To most holy Mary, to obtain a good death.

O Mary, what death shall I die? When I now think of my sins, and of that moment in which I shall expire and be judged, I am confounded and tremble! O my mother, in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in thy intercession, do I place my hopes! O comforter of the afflicted, abandon me not at that moment, fail not to console me in that great affliction! If thou help me not, I shall be lost. Ah, lady, before death comes, obtain for me a great sorrow for my sins, a true amendment, and a constant fidelity to God during the remainder of my life. And when I come to the last stage of my existence, O Mary, my hope, help me in those moments of misery; and comfort me, so that I may not despair at the sight of my sins, which the devil will then put before me. Obtain for me that I may then invoke thee more frequently, that I may die with thy name and that of thy Divine Son on my lips. Pardon my boldness if I ask thee even to come thyself to console me by thy presence before I expire. I am a sinner, it is true, and I am not worthy of such a favour; but I am thy servant; I love thee, and have great confidence in thee. O Mary, I shall expect thee; leave me not without consolation! At least, if I am unworthy of such a grace, assist me from heaven, that I may go forth from this life loving God and thee, and come to love you both eternally in paradise.

To most holy Mary, to obtain deliverance from hell and the possession of paradise.

O most dear lady, I thank thee that thou hast so many times delivered me from hell, which I have so often merited by my sins. I, a miserable wretch, was at one time condemned to that prison; already, perhaps at my first sin, the sentence would have been executed on me, if thou hadst not mercifully helped me. Without my even praying to thee, but out of thy pure compassion, thou didst restrain the Divine justice, and then overcoming my hardness of heart, thou didst encourage me to have confidence in thee. And, oh, into how many other sins should I not have fallen, in the many dangers which have occurred to

me, if thou, most loving mother, hadst not preserved me by the graces thou didst obtain for me. Ah, my Queen, keep me far from hell! O my mother, leave me not to myself, for I shall then be lost, but make me always fly to thee! Save me, my hope! save me from sin, which can alone condemn me to hell. May I come to rejoice with thee in heaven for all eternity. I thank God above all things for having given me this confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ, and in thee. Yes, I hope that thou wilt save me; that thou wilt free me from sin, and wilt obtain for me light and strength to fulfil the Divine will, and finally that thou wilt conduct me in safety to the gates of paradise. Thy servants have always had this hope, and none have been deceived. Neither shall I be. O Mary, it is so; thou must save me. Pray to thy Son (as I also pray to Him by the merits of His passion), that He may ever keep and increase in me this confidence; and so I shall be saved.

Thoughts and Ejaculations.

O God! who knows what fate awaits me?
 I shall be either eternally happy or eternally miserable.
 Of what worth is all the world without God?
 Let all be lost, but let not God be lost.
 I love Thee, my Jesus, who didst die for me!
 Would that I had died before I ever offended Thee!
 I will rather die than lose God.
 Jesus and Mary, you are my hope.
 My God, help me, for the love of Jesus Christ!
 My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me!
 Suffer me not to separate myself from Thee.
 Give me Thy love, and then do with me what Thou pleasest.
 Whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, my God?
 Eternal Father, help me, for the love of Jesus!
 I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee!
 Here I am, O Lord, do with me what Thou wilt!
 When shall I see myself altogether Thine, my God?
 When shall I be able to say to Thee, My God, I can lose Thee no more?
 Mary, my hope, have pity on me!
 Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!
 Lord, who am I, that Thou shouldst desire to be loved by me?
 My God, I desire Thee alone, and nothing more.
 I desire all which Thou dost will, and that alone.
 O, that I might be annihilated for Thee, who wast annihilated for me!
 Towards Thee alone, my God, have I been ungrateful!
 I have offended Thee enough, I will no longer displease Thee.

If I had died then, I could not have loved Thee any more.

Let me die before again offending Thee.

Thou hast waited for me that I might love Thee. Yea, I will love Thee.

I consecrate the remainder of my life to Thee.

O my Jesus, draw me entirely to Thyself!

Thou wilt not leave me; I will not leave Thee. I hope that we shall always love one another, O God of my soul!

My Jesus, make me all Thine before I die!

Grant that when Thou shalt come to judge me, I may see Thee with a benign countenance.

Thou hast done more than enough to oblige me to love Thee. I love Thee, I love Thee!

Deign to accept the love of a sinner who has so often offended Thee.

Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee.

I desire to love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in the next.

Teach me to know Thy great goodness, that I may love Thee very much.

Thou lovest those that love Thee. I love Thee; do Thou also love me.

Give me the love Thou requirest of me.

I rejoice that Thou art infinitely happy.

Oh, that I had always loved Thee, and had died before I had offended Thee.

Grant that I may overcome all things to please Thee.

I give Thee my whole will; dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

My pleasure is to please Thee, O Infinite Goodness!

I hope to love Thee for all eternity, O eternal God!

Thou art omnipotent; make me a saint.

Thou didst seek me while I was flying from Thee; Thou wilt not drive me away now that I seek after Thee.

I thank Thee for giving me time to love Thee. I thank Thee, and love Thee!

Let me give myself entirely to Thee this day.

Punish me in any way, but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

I will love Thee, my God, without reserve.

I accept all sufferings and all contempt, provided I may love Thee.

I desire to die for Thee, who didst die for me.

I wish that all could love Thee, who didst die for me.

I wish that all could love Thee as Thou meritest.

I wish to do every thing that I know to be Thy pleasure.

I care more to please Thee than for all the pleasures of the world.

O holy will of God, you are my love!

O Mary, draw me entirely to God!

O my Mother, make me always have recourse to thee to make me a saint; this is my love.

Protestation for a good life.

My God, being certain that I shall be damned when it will be, I intend not to repent at death; and I therefore declare this.

Church believes, and especially the mystery of the most Holy Trinity, the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, paradise and hell ; because Thou, who art truth itself, hast revealed all these truths.

I deserve a thousand hells ; but I hope in Thy mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to obtain pardon, final perseverance, and the glory of paradise.

I protest that I love Thee above all things, because Thou art the infinite good ; and because I love Thee, I am more sorry that I have so often offended Thee than for any other evil, and I resolve rather to die than offend Thee again. I pray Thee rather to take away my life than to permit me to lose Thee by another sin.

I thank Thee, my Jesus, for all the sufferings Thou hast undergone for me, and for the many mercies Thou hast shown me, after I had so greatly offended Thee.

My beloved Lord, I rejoice in that Thou art infinitely happy, and that Thou art loved by so many souls in heaven and on earth. I desire that all should know and love Thee.

I protest that if any one has offended me, I pardon him for the love of Thee, O my Jesus ; and I beg of Thee to do good to him !

I declare that I desire to receive the most holy Sacraments, both in life and death ; and I intend now to ask for absolution of my sins, in case I should not be able to give any sign of it at my death.

I accept my death, and all the pains which shall accompany it, in union with the death and sorrows which Jesus suffered on the cross. And I accept, my God, all pains and tribulations which Thou shalt send me before death. Do with me, and with all that belongs to me, as Thou pleasest. Give me Thy love and holy perseverance. I ask nothing more.

Thou art my Father, my God, my Lord, my Father, assist me always, but especially at the hour of death, help me and keep me in the path of my hope. Under thy mantle I desire to be covered, O Joseph, St. Michael Archangel, my Guardian Angel, assist me always, but especially in the hour

And Thou, my dear Jesus, who to obtain for me a good death didst give Thyself to suffer such a bitter death, abandon me not in my last hour. From this time I embrace Thee, that I may die in Thy arms. I deserve hell, but I throw myself on Thy mercy, hoping in Thy blood to die in Thy friendship, and to receive Thy blessing when I shall see Thee first as my judge. Into Thy hands, wounded for my love, I commend my soul. I hope in Thee, that Thou wilt not then condemn me to hell. *In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum.* Ah, help me always, but especially at my death; grant me to die loving Thee, so that the last sigh of my life may be an act of love, which shall transport me from this earth to love thee for ever in paradise.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my agony! Jesus Mary, and Joseph, I give myself to you; do you receive my soul at that moment!

Another protestation for a happy death, to be made with the people in common.

My God, prostrate in Thy presence, I adore Thee; and I intend to make the following protestation, as if I were on the point of passing out of this life into eternity.

My Lord, because Thou art the infallible truth, and hast revealed it to Thy holy Church, I believe in the mystery of the most holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons, but only one God, who rewards the just with heaven, and punishes sinners with hell. I believe that the second person, that is the Son of God, was made man and died for the salvation of mankind; I believe every thing else that the holy Church believes. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian, and I protest that in this holy faith I will live and die.

My God and my hope, trusting in Thy promises, I hope from Thy mercy, not by my own merits, but through the merits of Jesus Christ, to receive the pardon of my sins, perseverance in Thy grace, and after this miserable life, the glory of paradise. And if the devil should tempt me to despair at the sight of my sins, I declare that I will

always hope in Thee, my Lord, and I desire to abandon myself at death into the loving arms of Thy goodness.

O God, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with all my heart, I love Thee more than myself; and I protest that I desire to die making an act of love, in order to go on loving Thee for ever in paradise. I therefore ask it of Thee, and earnestly desire it. And if instead of loving Thee, I have hitherto despised Thy infinite goodness, I repent, my Lord, with all my heart; and I declare that I desire to die detesting and sorrowing for all my offences against Thee. I resolve for the future rather to die than sin again. And for Thy love I forgive all who have ever offended me.

My God, I accept death and all the pains which may accompany my own death; I unite them to the pains and death of Jesus Christ, and I offer it to Thee in honour of Thy supreme dominion, and in satisfaction for my sins. Accept, Lord, this sacrifice of my life which I make to Thee, for the sake of that great sacrifice which Thy Divine Son made Thee of Himself on the altar of the cross. I resign myself now entirely to Thy Divine will in anticipation of the hour of my death; protesting that I desire to die uttering these words: *May Thy Will, O Lord, be always done.*

Most holy Virgin, my mother and my advocate, thou, after God, art and shalt be my hope and comfort at the point of death. From this time I have recourse to thee, and pray thee to assist me in that passage. My dear queen, abandon me not in that last hour; but come, then, to take my soul and present it to thy Son. From henceforth I expect thee, and I hope to die under thy mantle and clinging to thy feet. St. Joseph, my protector, St. Michael Archangel, my guardian angel, and my holy patrons, help me in this last conflict with hell.

And Thou, my crucified love, my Jesus, who didst choose such a bitter death to obtain for me a good death, remember, then, that I am one of those Thy sheep whom Thou hast purchased with Thy blood; Thou who, when all men shall have abandoned me, and when none can help me any longer, Thou alone canst console and save me, make me **worthy to receive Thee at that hour in the Viati-**

cum; permit me not to lose Thee for ever, and to be banished for ever far from Thee in hell. No, my beloved Saviour, receive me then into Thy sacred wounds; for this end I also embrace Thee now, and declare that I intend to breathe out my soul in the loving wound of Thy sacred Side, saying now beforehand: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul! Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, receive my soul in that last moment!

'Tis blessed to suffer, Creator, most kind;

'Tis blessed to die, and to suffer for Thee.

I embrace Thee, O Crucified, hoping to find

Thine arms everlasting in death circling me.

So it will not be death, but ineffable rest,

That shall close at the last on these earth-wearied eyes,

When my forehead by Mary is soothingly prest,

And Jesus receives my last penitent sighs.

A short prayer to be said every day to Jesus crucified, and to Our Lady of Sorrows, to obtain the grace of a good death.

My Lord Jesus Christ, by that bitterness which Thou didst endure on the cross when Thy blessed soul was separated from Thy most sacred body, have pity on my sinful soul, when it shall leave my miserable body to enter into eternity.

O Mary, by that grief which thou didst experience on Calvary in seeing Jesus expire on the cross before thine eyes, obtain for me a good death, that loving Jesus and thee, my mother, in this life, I may attain heaven, where I shall love you for all eternity.

Domine Jesu Christe, per illam amaritudinem, quam sustinuit nobilissima anima tua, quando egressa est de benedicto corpore tuo, miserere animæ meæ peccatricis, quando egredietur de corpore meo. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRACTICE OF THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

§ 1. *The practice of humility.*

No one can please God without being humble, for He cannot bear the proud. He has promised to hear those who pray to Him; but if a proud man prays to Him, the Lord hears him not; to the humble, on the contrary, He dispenses His graces: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (St. Jas. iv. 6). Humility is of two kinds; humility of *affection*, and humility of the *will*. The former consists in the conviction we have of our own wretchedness, so that we can neither know nor do any thing but what is evil. All that we have and do that is good comes from God. Let us come now to the practice of humility. With regard then to the humility of the affections, first, we must put no confidence in our own strength, nor in our own resolutions; but we must be always diffident and fearful of ourselves: "With fear and trembling work out your salvation" (Phil. ii. 12). St. Philip Neri said: 'He who fears not is sure to fall.' Secondly, we must not glory in things that belong to us, as in our natural abilities, in our actions, in our birth, in our relations, and the like. It is therefore well never to speak of our actions, except to point out where we have been wrong. And it is better not to speak of ourselves at all, either for good or bad; because, even when we blame ourselves, it is often an occasion of vain-glory, by making us think that we shall be praised, or at least be considered humble, and thus humility becomes pride. Thirdly, let us not be angry with ourselves after we have committed a fault. That would not be humility but pride; and it is even a device of the devil to take away all our confidence, and make us leave off following a good life. When we see that we have fallen, we should say with St. Catherine of Genoa: 'Lord, these are the fruits of my own garden.' Then let us humble ourselves, and rise up immediately from the fault we have committed by an act of love and contrition, resolving not

to fall into the same fault again, and trusting in the help of God. And if we unhappily do fall again, we must always do the same. Fourthly, when we see others fall, we are not to wonder, rather let us compassionate them; and let us thank God, praying Him to keep His hand over us; otherwise the Lord will punish us by permitting us to fall into the same sins, and perhaps worse. Fifthly, we must always consider ourselves as the greatest sinners in the world; even when we know that others have sinned more than we; because our sins having been committed after we had received so many favours, and had been enlightened by so many graces, will be more displeasing to God than the faults of others, though they may be more numerous. St. Teresa writes, that we must not think we have made any progress in the way of perfection, if we do not esteem ourselves worse than every one else, and desire to be considered the last of all.

The humility of the *will* consists in being pleased when we are despised by others. Any one who has deserved hell, deserves to be trodden under foot by the devils for ever. Jesus Christ desires that we should learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (St. Matt. xi. 29). Many are humble in word, but not in heart. They say: 'I am worse than all: I deserve a thousand hells.' But when any one reproves them, or says a word that displeases them, they immediately take umbrage. They are like hedgehogs, which put out their bristles as soon as they are touched. But how is it; you say you are worse than all, and yet you cannot bear a word? 'He who is truly humble,' says St. Bernard, 'esteems himself good for nothing, and desires to be considered good for nothing by others as well.'

In the first place, then, if you wish to be truly humble, when you receive an admonition, receive it in good part, and thank the person who admonishes you. St. Chrysostom says, 'when the just man is corrected, he is sorry for the error he has committed; but the proud man is sorry that the error should be known.' The saints, when they are accused, even wrongfully, do not justify themselves,

except when to defend themselves is necessary to avoid giving scandal: otherwise they are silent, and offer all to God.

In the second place, when you receive any affront, suffer it patiently, and increase in love towards the person who has ill-treated you. This is the touchstone by which you may know whether a person is humble and holy. If he resents an injury, even though he may work miracles, you may say that he is an empty reed. Father Balthazar Alvarez said, that the time of humiliation is the time to gain treasures of merits. You will gain more by peaceably suffering contempt, than you could do by fasting ten days on bread and water. Humiliations which we inflict on ourselves are good; but those which we accept from the hands of others are worth much more, because in these last there is less of self and more of God; therefore, when we know how to bear them the merit is greater. But what can a Christian pretend to do if he cannot bear to be despised for the sake of God? How many contempts did not Jesus Christ suffer for us! Buffetings, derisions, scourging, and spitting in His face! Ah, if we loved Jesus Christ, not only should we not show resentment for injuries, but we should rejoice at seeing ourselves despised as Jesus Christ was despised.

§ 2. *The practice of mortification.*

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me" (St. Matt. xvi. 24). This is all that any one who wishes to be a follower of Jesus Christ has to do. The denying of oneself is the mortification of self-love. Do we wish to be saved? We must then conquer all to make sure of all. How miserable is the soul that allows itself to be guided by self-love! Mortification is of two kinds, *internal* and *external*; by interior mortification we have to study to conquer our passions, and especially our most predominant one. A person who does not overcome his predominant passion is in great danger of being lost. Whereas he who has overcome that, will easily conquer all the others. Some, however, allow one vice to predominate in themselves, and think that they

are good, because they do not see in themselves vices which others have. 'But what does it matter?' says St. Cyril: 'one leak is sufficient to sink the ship.' Nor will it suffice to say, 'I cannot abstain from this vice;' a resolute will conquers all; that is, of course, with the assistance of God, who will never fail us.

External mortification has to do with conquering the sensual appetites. Worldly people call the saints cruel when they deny their bodies all satisfaction of the senses, and chastise them with *cilices*, disciplines, and other penances. 'But,' says St. Bernard, 'they are much more cruel in reality to themselves, who condemn themselves to burn for ever in hell-fire for the sake of the short and miserable pleasures of this life.' Others say that all forbidden pleasures should be denied to the body; but they despise external mortifications, saying, that interior mortification is what is required; that is, the mortification of the will. Yes (my good sir), it is principally necessary to mortify the will, but the mortification of the flesh is also necessary; because, when the flesh is not mortified, it will be hard to be obedient to God. St. John of the Cross said, that any one who taught that external mortification was not necessary, ought not to be believed, even though he worked miracles. But let us come to the practice of it.

In the first place, the eyes must be mortified. The first arrows which wound the soul, and often kill it, enter through the eyes. The eyes are, as it were, grappling-irons of hell, which drag souls, as if by main force, into sin. A certain Pagan philosopher voluntarily put out his eyes to free himself from impurities. It is not lawful for us to pluck out our eyes, but we ought to make them blind by means of mortification; otherwise we shall find it difficult to keep ourselves chaste. St. Francis of Sales said, 'You must close the gates, if you do not wish the enemy to enter into the citadel.' We must then abstain from looking at any object that may give occasion to temptation. St. Aloysius Gonzaga did not dare to raise his eyes to look even at his own mother; and when by chance our eyes light on some dangerous object, let us take care not to fix them on it. It is not so much the mere seeing (said St. Francis of Sales),

but the inspecting and continuing to look, that is the cause of ruin. Let us then be very careful in mortifying our eyes; because many are now in hell on account of sins committed with the eyes.

In the second place, we must mortify our tongue, by abstaining from words of detraction, or of abuse, or of obscenity. An impure word spoken in conversation, even in jest, may prove a scandal to others, and be the cause of a thousand sins arising from it. And it should be observed, that sometimes a word of double meaning, said in a witty way, does more harm than a word openly impure.

In the third place, we must mortify the taste. St. Andrew Avellini said that, in order to begin to live a good Christian life, a man must commence by the mortification of his palate. And St. Francis of Sales said, 'we must eat to live, not live to eat.' Many seem to live only to eat, and thus they destroy the health both of their soul and body. For the most part obstructions, diarrhœa, and other illnesses, are caused by the vice of gluttony. But the worst is, that intemperance in eating and drinking, is often the cause of incontinency. Cassian writes, that it is impossible but that a man, who is satiated with food and heating drinks—as wine, brandy, and the like—should feel many impure temptations. 'But how is this?' says such a one; 'must I eat no more?' Yes (my good friend), we must eat to preserve our life, but like rational beings, not as brutes. Especially if you desire to be free from impure temptations, abstain from eating overmuch meat, and from overmuch wine. The Scripture says, "Give not wine to kings" (Prov. xxxi. 4). By a king is meant one who brings his flesh under the dominion of reason. Much wine makes us lose our reason, and involves not only the vice of drunkenness, which is certainly a mortal sin, but also that of impurity. Regret not having sometimes to fast or to abstain, especially on a Saturday, in honour of the most holy Mary. Many do so on bread and water; this you can at least do on the vigils of the seven principal feasts of Our Lady. I pray you to observe at least the fasts of obligation. Some go beyond fifteen or twenty ounces at collation, and say, 'It is sufficient if I am not satisfied.' No, it is not enough; the most

that can be taken on the evenings of fast days of obligation is eight ounces; and even that has grown up by custom; for in olden times food could only be taken once a day.

In the fourth place, we must mortify our hearing and our touch: the hearing, by avoiding listening to immodest and scandalous conversations: the touch, by using all possible caution, as well towards others as with ourselves. Some say it is nothing, that they only do it in fun; but who, I ask, would play with fire?

§ 3. *The practice of charity towards our neighbour*

He who loves God, loves his neighbour also; but he who loves not his neighbour, neither does he love God; for the Divine precept says, "That he who loveth God, loves also his brother" (1 St. John iv. 21). We must also love our neighbour in heart as well as in deed. And how much are we to love him? Here is the rule: "Love the Lord thy God with thy whole soul . . . and thy neighbour as thyself" (St. Luke x. 27). We must, then, love God above all things, and more than ourselves; and our neighbour as ourselves. So that, as we desire our own good, and take delight in it when we have it, and, on the contrary, are sorry for any evil that may happen to us; so also we must desire our neighbour's good, and rejoice when he obtains it; and, on the other hand, we must be sorry for his misfortunes. So, again, we must neither judge nor suspect evil of our neighbour, without good grounds. And this is what constitutes interior charity.

External charity consists in our words and actions towards our neighbour. As to words, first we must abstain from the least shadow of detraction. A detractor is hateful to God and man. On the contrary, he who speaks well of every one is beloved by God and men; and when the fault cannot be excused, we must at least excuse the intention. Secondly, let us be careful not to repeat to any one the evil that has been said of him by another; because sometimes long enmities and revenge arise from such things. The Scripture says, he who sows discord is hated by God. Thirdly, we must take care not to wound our

neighbour, by saying any thing that may hurt him; even were it only in jest. Would you like to be laughed at in the same way as you laugh at your neighbour? Fourthly, let us avoid disputes: sometimes on account of a mere trifling quarrels are begun, which end in abuse and rancour. We have also to guard against the spirit of contradiction, which some indulge when they gratuitously set themselves to contradict every thing. On such occasions give your opinion, and then be quiet. Fifthly, let us speak gently to all, even to our inferiors; therefore let us not make use of imprecations or abuse. And when our neighbour is angry with us, and is somewhat abusive, let us answer meekly, and the quarrel will be at an end: "A mild answer breaketh wrath" (Prov. xv. 1). And when we are annoyed by our neighbour, we must be careful not to say any thing; because our passion will then make us go too far: it will make us exaggerate; but afterwards we shall certainly be sorry for it. St. Francis of Sales says, 'I was never angry in my life, that I did not repent of it shortly afterwards.' The rule is to be silent as long as we feel ourselves disturbed. And when our neighbour continues to be irritated, let us reserve the correction till another time, even though it should be necessary; because for the moment our words would not convince, and would do no good.

With regard also to the charity of our actions towards our neighbour: first it is practised by aiding him as we best may. Let us remember what says the Scripture: "For alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness" (Job iv. 11). Almsgiving, then, saves us from sin and from hell. By alms is understood any assistance which it is in our power to render to our neighbour. The kind of almsgiving which is the most meritorious is, to help the soul of our neighbour, by correcting him gently and opportunely, whenever we can. And let not us say with some, 'What does it signify to me?' It does signify to one who is a Christian. He who loves God, wishes to see Him loved by all.

Secondly, we must show charity towards the sick, who are in greater need of help. Let us take them some little present, if they are poor. At least let us go and wait on

them and comfort them, even though they should not thank us for it; the Lord will reward us for it.

Thirdly, we must above all show charity to our enemies. Some are all kindness with their friends; but Jesus Christ says, "Do good to those that hate you" (St. Matt. v. 44). By this you may know that a man is a true Christian, if he seeks to do good to those who wish him evil. And if we can do nothing else for those who persecute us, let us at least pray that God will prosper them, according as Jesus commands us: "Pray for them that persecute you" (St. Matt. v. 44). This is the way the saints revenged themselves. He who pardons any one who has offended him, is sure of being pardoned by God; since God has given us the promise: "Forgive; and you shall be forgiven" (St. Luke vi. 37). Our Lord said one day to the Blessed Angela of Foligno, that the surest sign of a soul being loved by God, is when it loves a person who has offended it.

Fourthly, let us also be charitable to our neighbours who are dead, that is, to the holy souls in purgatory. St. Thomas says, that if we are bound to help our neighbours who are alive, we are also bound to remember them when dead. Those holy prisoners are suffering pains which exceed all the sufferings of this life; and nevertheless are in the greatest necessity, since they cannot possibly help themselves. A Cistercian monk once said to the sacristan of his monastery: 'Help me, brother, by your prayers, when I can no longer help myself.' Let us then endeavour to succour these holy souls, either by having Masses said for them, or by hearing Masses for them, by giving alms, or at least by praying, and applying indulgences in their behalf; they will show themselves grateful by obtaining great graces for us, not only when they reach heaven, if they get there sooner through our prayers, but also in purgatory.

§ 4. *The practice of patience.*

St. James says, that patience is the perfect work of a soul: "And patience hath a perfect work" (St. James i. 4). It is by patience that we gain heaven. This earth is a place where we can gain merit; therefore it is not a place of rest,

but of labours and sufferings; and it is for this end that God makes us live here, that by patience we may obtain the glory of paradise. Every one has to suffer in this world; but he who suffers with patience suffers less and saves himself, while he who suffers with impatience suffers more and is damned. Our Lord does not send us crosses that He may see us lost, as some impatient people say, but that we may be thereby saved, and inherit more glory in heaven. Sorrows, contradictions, and all other tribulations, when accepted with patience, become the brightest jewels in our heavenly crown. Whenever, then, we are in affliction, let us console ourselves and thank God for it, since it is a sign that God wishes us to be saved, by chastising us in this life, where the chastisements are but slight and short, so as not to punish us in the next, where the chastisements are cruel and eternal. Woe to the sinner who is prosperous in this life! it is a sign that God has reserved for him eternal punishment.

St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said: 'All sufferings, however great, become sweet when we look at Jesus on the cross.' And St. Joseph Calasanctius: 'He who cannot suffer for Jesus Christ, does not know how to gain Jesus Christ for his own.' He, then, who loves Jesus Christ bears patiently all external crosses, — sickness, pains, dishonour, loss of parents and friends; and all interior crosses, — afflictions, weariness, temptations, and desolation of spirit, and he bears them all in peace. On the other hand, he who is impatient and angry when he is in tribulation, what does he do? He does but increase his suffering, and adds to his punishments in the next life. St. Teresa says in her writings: 'The cross is felt by those who drag it after them by force; but he who embraces it with a good will does not feel it.' Hence St. Philip Neri also said: 'In this world there is no purgatory, it is either heaven or hell: he who bears tribulation with patience is in heaven, but he who does not is in hell.' Let us go on to the practice.

First, patience must be practised in sickness. The time of sickness is a time for testing the devotion of people, whether it is of lead or of gold. Some are pious and cheerful when they are in good health; but when they

are visited by any illness they lose their patience, complain of every thing, and give themselves up to melancholy, and commit a thousand other faults. Their gold turns out to be lead. St Joseph Calasanctius said : ' If sick people were patient, we should hear no more complaints.' Some complain and say : ' But as long as I am in this state, I cannot go to church, nor to communion, nor to Mass ; in short, I can do nothing.' You say you can do nothing. You do every thing when you do the will of God. Tell me, why do you want to do those things you have named ? Is it to please God ? This is the good pleasure of God, that you should embrace with patience all you have to endure, and should leave every thing else that you wish to do alone. ' God is served (writes St. Francis of Sales) more by suffering than by any other works we can do.'

If our sickness be dangerous, then especially must we accept it with all patience, being willing to die should the end of our life be really at hand. Neither let us say thus : ' But I am not now prepared ; I should like to live a little longer to do penance for my sins.' And how do you know, that if you were to live on, you would do penance, and would not fall into greater sins ? How many there are who, after recovering from some mortal illness, have become worse than they were before, and have been lost ; while, perhaps, if they had died then, they would have been saved ! If it is the will of God that you should leave this world, unite yourself to His holy will, and thank Him for allowing you the help of the holy Sacraments, and accept death with tranquillity, abandoning yourself into the arms of His mercy. This compliance with the Divine will, by accepting death, will be sufficient to insure your eternal salvation.

In the second place, we must accept also with patience the death of our relations and friends. Some on the death of a relation are so inconsolable, that they leave off saying their prayers, frequenting the sacraments, and all their devotions. Such a one goes so far as even to be angry with God, and to say : ' Lord, why hast thou done it ?' What rashness is this ! Tell me, what does all your grief profit you ? Do you perhaps think to do pleasure to the dead

person? No; what you are doing is displeasing to him as well as to God. He desires that, with regard to his death, you should become more united to God, and should pray for him if he is in purgatory.

In the third place, let us accept the poverty which God sends us. When you are in want even of the necessities of life, say: 'My God, Thou alone art sufficient for me.' One such act will gain treasures for us in paradise. He who possesses God has every good. In the same way let us embrace with patience the loss of property, the failure of our expectations, or even the loss of those who were helping us. Let us be resigned at such times to the will of God, and God will help us; and if He should not then help us as we should wish, let us be content with whatever He may do, because He will do it to try our patience, that He may enrich us with greater merits and the goods of heaven.

In the fourth place, we must accept patiently contempts and persecutions. You will say: 'But what evil have I done, that I should be so persecuted? Why have I had to suffer such an affront?' My brother, go and say this to Jesus Christ on the cross, and He will answer: 'And I, what have I done, that I should have to suffer such sorrow and ignominy, and this death of the cross?' If then Jesus Christ has suffered so much for the love of you, it is no great thing that you should suffer this little for the love of Jesus Christ. Particularly if you have ever during your life committed some grievous sin, think that you deserve to be in hell, where you would have to suffer much greater contempt and persecution from the devils. If also you should be persecuted for having done good, rejoice exceedingly. Hear what Jesus Christ says: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake" (St. Matt. v. 10). Let us be convinced of the truth of what the Apostle says, that he who would live united to Jesus Christ in this world must be persecuted.

In the fifth place, we must practise patience also in spiritual desolations, which are the heaviest afflictions for a soul that loves God. But God in this way proves the love of His beloved ones. At such times let us humble

ourselves and be resigned to the will of God, putting ourselves entirely into His hands. Let us be most careful also not to leave off any of our devotions, our prayers, frequenting of the sacraments, our visits to the blessed Sacrament, or our spiritual reading. As we do every thing then with weariness and trouble, it seems to us to be all lost, but it is not so : while we persevere in all these things, we work without any satisfaction to ourselves ; but it is very pleasing to God.

In the sixth and last place, we must practise patience in temptations. Some cowardly souls, when a temptation lasts a long time are disheartened, and will sometimes even say : God then desires my damnation. No ; God permits us to be tempted, not for our damnation, but for our advantage, that we may then humble ourselves the more, and unite ourselves more closely to Him, by forcing ourselves to resist, redoubling our prayers, and thereby acquiring greater merits for heaven. "And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee" (Tob. xii. 13). Thus was it said to Tobias. Every temptation which we overcome gains for us fresh degrees of glory, and greater strength to resist future temptations. Nor does God ever permit us to be tempted beyond our strength : "And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able ; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

We should, however, beg our Lord to deliver us from temptations ; notwithstanding, when they come, let us resign ourselves to His holy will, beseeching him to give us strength to resist. St. Paul was troubled with carnal temptations, and he prayed to God to deliver him from them ; but the Lord said to him : "My grace is sufficient for thee ; for power is made perfect in infirmity" (2 Cor. xii. 9). In sensual temptations especially the first precaution to be taken is to remove ourselves as far as possible from all occasions, and then immediately to have recourse to Jesus Christ for help, not trusting in our own strength. And when the temptation continues, let us not cease to pray, saying : "Jesus, help me ! Mary, ever Virgin,

assist me ! The mere invocation of these all-powerful names of Jesus and Mary will suffice to defeat the most violent assaults of hell. It is also of great use to make the sign of the cross on our forehead, or over our heart. By the sign of the cross, St. Anthony Abbot overcame similar attacks of the devil. It is also a very good thing to acquaint your spiritual father with your temptations. St. Philip Neri used to say: ' A temptation which is declared is half overcome.'

§ 5. *The practice of conformity to the will of God.*

All sanctity consists in loving God ; and the love of God consists in fulfilling His holy will. In this is our life : " And life in His good will " (Ps. xxix. 6). And he who is always united to the will of God is always in peace ; for the Divine will takes away the bitterness of every cross. By saying, God wills it so, God has so willed, holy souls find peace in all their labours : " Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad " (Prov. xii. 21). You say : Every thing goes wrong with me ; God sends me all kinds of misfortunes. Things go wrong with you, my friend, because you make them go wrong ; if you were to be resigned to the will of God, all would go well, and for your good. The crosses which God sends you are misfortunes, because you make them misfortunes ; if you would take them with resignation, they would no longer be misfortunes, but riches for paradise. Ven. Balthazar Alvarez says : ' He who in his troubles resigns himself with peacefulness to the Divine will, runs to God post-haste.' Let us now come to this practice.

And first, let us resign ourselves in the sicknesses which befall us. Worldly people call illnesses misfortunes, but the saints call them visitations of God and favours. When we are ill we ought certainly to take remedies in order to be cured, but we should always be resigned to whatever God disposes. And if we pray for restoration to health, let it always be done with resignation, otherwise we shall not obtain the favour. But how much do we not gain when we are ill by offering to God all we suffer ! He who loves God from his heart does not desire to be cured of his

illness in order not to suffer, but he desires to please God by suffering. It was this love which made the scourge, the rack, and the burning pitch, sweet to the holy Martyrs. We must also be especially resigned in mortal sicknesses. To accept death at such a time, in order that the will of God may be fulfilled, merits for us a reward similar to that of the Martyrs, because they accepted death to please God. He who dies in union with the will of God makes a holy death; and the more closely he is united to it, the more holy death does he die. The Venerable Blosius declares that an act of perfect conformity to the will of God at the hour of death not only delivers us from hell, but also from purgatory.

Secondly, we must also unite ourselves to the will of God with regard to our *natural defects*, as want of talents, being of low birth, weak health, bad sight, want of ability for affairs, and the like. All that we have is the free gift of God. Might He not have made us a fly or a blade of grass? A hundred years ago were we any thing but nothingness? And what more do we want? Let it suffice that God has given us the power of becoming saints. Although we may have little talent, poor health, and may be poor and abject, we may very well become saints through His grace if we have the will. Oh, how many unfortunate beings have been damned on account of their talents, their health, high birth, riches or beauty! Let us then be content with what God has done for us; and let us thank Him always for the good things He has given us, and particularly for having called us to the holy faith; this is a great gift, and one for which few are found to thank God.

Thirdly, we must resign ourselves in all adversities which may happen to us, as the loss of property, of our expectations, of our relations; and in the attacks and persecutions we may meet with from men. You will say: But God does not will sin; how is it that I must resign myself when some one calumniates me, wrongs me, attacks and defrauds me? That cannot happen by the will of God. What a deception is this! God does not will the sin of such a one; He permits it: but, on the other hand, He does will the adversity which you suffer by means of this

person. So that it is our Lord Himself who sends you that cross, though it comes to you by means of your neighbour; therefore even in these cases you must embrace the cross as coming from God. Nor let us seek to find out a reason for such treatment. St. Teresa said: 'If you are willing to bear only those crosses for which you see a reason, perfection is not for you.'

Fourthly, we must be resigned in aridity of soul; if, when we say our prayers, make our communions, visit the blessed Sacrament, &c., all seems to weary and give us no comfort, let us be satisfied in knowing that we please God, and that the less satisfaction we feel ourselves in our devotions the more pleasure do we give Him. At no time can we know better our own insufficiency and misery than in the time of aridity; and therefore let us humble ourselves in our prayers, and put ourselves with resignation into God's hands, and say: 'Lord, I do not deserve consolations; I desire nothing but that Thou have pity on me; keep me in Thy grace, and do with me what Thou wilt. And so doing, we shall gain more in one day of desolation than in a month of tears and sensible devotion. And generally speaking, this should be the continual tenour of our prayers, offering ourselves to God, that He may do with us as He pleases; saying to Him in our prayers, our communions and in the visit: 'My God, make me do Thy will.' In doing the will of God we shall do every thing. For this end let us accustom ourselves to have always on our lips the ejaculation: *Fiat voluntas tua!* 'Thy will be done,' even in the least things we do; for instance, if we snuff out a candle, break a glass, or stumble over something, let us always repeat: 'May the will of God be done!' When we lose any of our possessions, or when one of our relations dies, or any thing else of the same sort happens to us, let us say: 'O Lord, it is Thy will, it is my will also.' And when we fear any temporal ill, let us say: 'O Lord, I will whatever Thou wilt.' Thus we shall be very pleasing in the sight of God, and shall be always in peace.

§ 6. *The practice of purity of intention.*

Purity of intention consists in doing every thing with

the sole view of pleasing God. The good or bad intention with which an action is performed renders it good or bad before God. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said : ' God rewards actions according to the amount of purity of intention with which they are done.' Let us examine the practice of it.

In the first place, in all our exercises (of devotion), let us seek God and not ourselves : if we seek our own satisfaction we cannot expect to receive any reward from God. And this holds good for all spiritual works. How many labour and exhaust themselves in preaching, hearing confessions, serving at the altar, and in doing other pious works ; and because in these they seek themselves and not God, they lose all ! When we seek neither approbation nor thanks from others for what we do, it is a sign that we work for God's sake : as also when we are not vexed at the good we undertake not succeeding ; or when we rejoice as much at any good that is done by others, as if it had been done by ourselves. Further, whenever we have done some good in order to please God, let us not torment ourselves in endeavouring to drive away vain-glory ; if we are praised for it ; it is enough to say : ' To God be the honour and glory.' And let us never omit doing any good action which may be edifying to our neighbour, through the fear of vain-glory. Our Lord wishes us to do good even before others, that it may be profitable to them : " So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven " (St. Matt. v. 16). Therefore when you do good, have first the intention of pleasing God ; and secondly, that also of giving a good example to your neighbour.

In the second place, in our bodily actions ; whether we work, or eat, or drink, or amuse ourselves with propriety, let us do all in order to please God. Purity of intention may be called the heavenly alchemy, which changes iron into gold ; by which is meant, that the most trivial and ordinary actions when done to please God become acts of Divine love. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi used to say : ' A person who performs all his actions with a pure intention will go straight to Paradise.' A holy hermit, before

putting his hand to any work, used to raise his eyes to heaven, and keep them fixed there for a short time; and when he was asked what he was doing, he replied: 'I am taking my aim, so that I may not miss the mark.' Let us also do in like manner: before beginning any action, let us make sure of our aim, and say: 'Lord, I do this to please Thee.'

§ 7. *Rules for avoiding tepidity.*

Souls that make no account of venial sins, and give themselves up to tepidity, without a thought of freeing themselves from it, live in great danger. We do not here speak of those venial sins which are committed by mere frailty, such as useless or idle words, interior disquietudes, and negligence in small matters; but we speak of venial sins committed with full deliberation, above all when they are habitual. St. Teresa writes thus: 'From all deliberate sin, howsoever small it may be, O Lord, deliver us!' Ven. Alvarez used to say: 'Those little backbitings, dislikes, culpable curiosity, acts of impatience and intemperance, do not indeed kill the soul, but they weaken it so, that when any great temptation takes it unexpectedly, it will not have strength enough to resist, and will consequently fall.' So that as on the one hand deliberate venial sins weaken the soul, so on the other do they deprive us of the divine assistance; for it is but just that God should be sparing with those who are sparing towards Him: "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly" (2 Cor. ix. 6). And that is what a soul that has received special graces from God has the most reason to fear. Still more ought it to fear lest such faults should be caused by some passionate attachment, as of ambition, or avarice, or of aversion, or inordinate affection towards any person. It happens not unfrequently to souls that are in bondage to some passion as it does to gamblers, who, after losing many times, at the last throw say, 'Let us risk every thing;' and so finish by losing all they have. In what a miserable state is that soul which is the slave of some passion; for passion blinds us, and lets us no longer see what we are doing. Let us now come to

the practice of what we have to do, in order to be able to deliver ourselves from the wretched state of tepidity.

It is necessary in the first place to have a firm desire to get out of this state. The good desire lightens our labour, and gives us strength to go forward. And let us rest assured that he who makes no progress in the way of God will always be going back; and he will go back so far, that at last he will fall over some precipice. Secondly, let us try to find out our predominant faults to which we are most attached, whether it be anger, ambition, or disordinate affection to persons or things: a resolute will overcomes all with the help of God. Thirdly, we must avoid the occasion, otherwise all our resolutions will fall to the ground. And lastly, we must above all be diffident of our own strength, and pray continually with all confidence to God, begging Him to help us in the danger we are in, and to deliver us from those temptations by which we shall fall into sin; which is the meaning of the petition, *Ne nos inducas in tentationem* — ‘Lead us not into temptation.’ He who prays obtains: “Ask, and you shall receive” (St John xvi. 24). This is a promise of God, and can never fail; therefore we must always pray, always pray; and let us never leave off repeating. ‘We must pray always, we must pray always; my God help me, and that soon!’

§ 8. *The practice of devotion towards the great Mother of God.*

As regards this devotion, I hope that the reader is fully persuaded that, in order to insure eternal salvation, it is most important to be devout to the most Holy Mary. And if he should wish to be still more convinced of it, I would beg him to read the book I have written, called *The Glories of Mary*. We shall here speak only of the practices you may observe, that you may obtain the protection of this sovereign Lady. First, every morning and evening, when you get up and before you go to bed, say three *Hail Marys*, adding this short prayer: ‘By thy pure and immaculate conception, O Mary, make me pure in body and holy in soul!’ And put yourself beneath her mantle, that she may keep you that day or that night from

sin. And every time you hear the clock strike, say a *Hail Mary*; do the same whenever you go in or out of the house, and when you pass by any picture or statue of the Blessed Virgin. So also when you begin and finish any of your occupations; such as your study, work, eating, or sleeping, never omit to say a *Hail Mary*. Secondly, say the Rosary, meditating on the mysteries, every day, at least five decades. Many devout people also say the Office of Our Lady; it would be well to say at any rate the Little Office of the Name of Mary, which is very short, and composed of five short psalms. Thirdly, say an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* every day to the ever-blessed Trinity in thanksgiving for the graces that have been bestowed upon Mary. The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to a person that this devotion was very pleasing to her. Fourthly, fast on bread and water every Saturday in honour of Mary, or at least on the Vigils of her seven feasts; or at any rate fast in the ordinary way, or eat only of one dish, or abstain from something you like. In short, make use of some kind of mortification on Saturdays, and on the above-named vigils, for the sake of this Queen, who (as St. Andrew of Crete says) repays these little things with great graces. Fifthly, pay a visit every day to some image of your patroness, and ask her to give you holy perseverance and the love of Jesus Christ. Sixthly, let no day pass without reading a little about Our Lady, or else say some prayer to this Blessed Virgin. For this purpose we have here put seven prayers to Mary, for the seven days of the week (see Chap. II. § 7).* Seventhly, make the novenas for the seven principal feasts of Mary, and ask your confessor to tell you what devotions and mortifications you should practise during those nine days: say at least nine *Hail Marys* and *Glory be to the Father*, and beg her each day of the novena to give you some special grace that you are in want of. Lastly, often recommend yourself to this Divine Mother during the day, and particularly in time of temptation, saying at such times, and often

* The seven prayers to which the saint refers are in the *Glories of Mary*, and have been indulgenced by Pius VII. Vid. *Raccolta d'Indulgenze*.

repeating with great affection, 'Mary, help me! help me, my Mother!' And if you love Mary, try to promote devotion to this great Mother of God among your relations, friends, and servants.

§ 9. *On the practice of certain means by which we may acquire the love of Jesus Christ.*

Jesus Christ ought to be our whole love. He is worthy of it, both because He is a God of infinite goodness, and because He has loved us to such an excess, that He died for us. Oh, what a great obligation we are under to Jesus Christ! All the good we enjoy, all our inspirations, calls, pardons, helps, hopes, consolations, sweetnesses, and loving affections, come to us through Jesus Christ. Let us see by what means we are to acquire this love of Jesus Christ.

In the first place, we must desire to have this love of Jesus Christ, and we must, therefore, often ask Him to give it us; especially in our prayers, in our communions, and in the visit to the Blessed Sacrament. And this grace must also be sought for at the hands of the ever-blessed Mary, from our guardian angel and our holy patrons, that they may enable us to love Jesus Christ. St. Francis of Sales says that the grace of loving Jesus Christ contains all other graces in itself; because he who truly loves Jesus Christ cannot be wanting in any virtue.

In the second place, if we wish to acquire the love of Jesus Christ, we must detach our hearts from all earthly affections; Divine love will find no place in a heart that is full of this world. St. Philip Neri used to say: 'The love we give to creatures is all so much taken from God.'

In the third place, we must often exercise ourselves, especially when we pray, in making acts of love to Jesus Christ. Acts of love are the fuel with which we keep alive the fire of holy charity. Let us make acts of love and complacency, saying: 'My Jesus, I rejoice that Thou art infinitely happy, and that Thy eternal Father loves Thee as much as Himself!' Of benevolence: 'I wish, my Jesus, that all could know and love Thee!' Of predilection, as: 'My Jesus, I love Thee more than all things! I love Thee

more than myself!' Let us also often make acts of contrition, which are called acts of sorrowful love.

In the fourth place, if any one wishes to make sure of being inflamed with love towards Jesus Christ, let him often try to meditate on His passion. It was revealed to a holy solitary, that no exercise was more efficacious in enkindling love, than the consideration of the sufferings and ignominy which Jesus Christ endured for love of us. I say, it is impossible that a soul, meditating often on the passion of Jesus Christ, should be able to resist His love. It was for this that, although He could have saved us by one drop of His blood, nay even by a single prayer, He chose to suffer so much, and to shed all His blood, that He might attract all hearts to love Him; therefore he who meditates on His passion does what is very agreeable to Him. Do you, then, often make your meditation on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do so at least every Friday, the day on which He died for the love of us. For this purpose I have written many meditations on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, especially the *Darts of Fire*,* which speak of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us in the great work of our redemption.

Abridgment of the Rule of Life for a Christian.

I. On rising in the morning, make the following acts :
 1. My God, I adore Thee, I love Thee with my whole heart, and I thank Thee for all Thy benefits, especially for having preserved me the night past. 2. I offer Thee all my actions and sufferings of this day, in union with the actions and sufferings of Jesus and Mary; and I make the intention of gaining all the indulgences in my power during the present day. 3. I purpose, O Lord, to avoid offending Thee this day; but be Thou pleased to support me constantly in Thy hands, that I may not betray Thee. O Mary most holy, shelter me under your mantle! My angel guardian and all my holy patrons, assist me! Then conclude with an *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, and *Creed*; and say, finally, three *Hail Marys*, in honour of the purity of Mary.

* These will be found in the volume on the Passion.

II. Take care to make half an hour's meditation as soon as possible in the day. For though meditation is not absolutely necessary, it is morally necessary, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance. Those who neglect it will find it very difficult to persevere in the grace of God. The reasons for this are twofold : the first is, because the eternal truths cannot be seen by the eyes of the flesh, but by the eye of the understanding, which is reflection. Hence he does not perceive them who does not meditate ; and for want of perceiving them he will hardly arrive at a due appreciation of the importance of salvation, of the means which secure it,* and of the obstacles which hinder it ; so that his salvation will be placed in imminent risk. The second reason is, because the soul that does not practise meditation will also be backward to practise prayer. Now prayer is necessary, not merely as a precept, but as a means to observe the commandments, since, as a general rule, and speaking of adults, God only gives His grace to those who ask for it. But without meditation a person has a very faint notion of his own spiritual wants, and he is moreover but slightly impressed with the necessity of praying, in order to overcome temptations and to save his soul ; thus he is led to pray but little or nothing, and for want of prayer is eventually lost. The eminent Bishop Palafox said : ' How will the Lord give us perseverance, unless we ask Him for it ? And how shall we ask Him for it without prayer ? ' On the other hand, St. Teresa declares, that it is hardly possible for a man that prays to remain long in sin ; he will either forsake prayer or forsake sin : prayer and sin are incompatible.

III. With regard to practice, meditation has three parts : preparation, consideration, and conclusion. In the preparation must be made three acts : 1, of the presence of God ; 2, of humility ; 3, of petition for light. We say, 1, ' My God, I believe Thou art here present, and I adore Thee ; ' 2, ' I deserve at this moment to be burning in hell. O my God, I am sorry for having offended thee ! ' 3, ' Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, grant me light in this meditation, that I may profit by it ' Then say a *Hail Mary* to the Divine Mother, and a *Glory be to the*

Father, &c. in honour of our angel guardian. Then **read** the point of meditation, and be sure to meditate, at least occasionally, on the Passion of Jesus Christ. It must also be understood, that the fruit of prayer does not so much consist in meditating, but rather, 1, in producing affections—for instance, of humility, confidence, love, sorrow, offering, resignation, and the like ; 2, in making petition, and especially imploring God to grant us perseverance and His holy love ; 3, in making the resolution to avoid some particular sin, and of practising some particular virtue.

Finally, the conclusion is made thus : 1, ‘Thank Thee, O God, for the lights Thou hast given me ;’ 2, ‘I purpose to keep the resolutions I have made ;’ 3, ‘and I beg Thy grace to fulfil them.’ Neither must we ever forget to recommend to God the holy souls in purgatory, and all poor sinners. We must never omit our accustomed meditation, whatever coldness and weariness we may feel over it ; for St. Teresa says : ‘To do so would be to cast ourselves into hell with our own hands.’ Moreover, let all bear in mind, that Benedict XIV. granted a plenary indulgence to every one who shall make a meditation of half an hour every day for a month, with confession and communion ; and partial indulgences are also granted every day to those who meditate.

IV. Do not omit to hear Mass daily. But what is of the grandest importance is, that those who hear Mass should make a special application to their own souls of the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Mass should be heard for the same ends for which it was instituted ; namely, 1, to honour Almighty God ; 2, to thank Him for His benefits ; 3, to make atonement for the punishment due to our sins ; 4, to obtain Divine grace. So that we ought then to pray as follows : ‘Eternal Father, in this Mass I offer Thee Jesus Christ, with all the merits of His passion ; 1, to honour Thy Majesty ; 2, to thank Thee for all Thy benefits towards me ; 3, in satisfaction for my sins, and for those of all the living, and of those who died in Thy grace ; 4, to obtain all the graces necessary for salvation.’ At the elevation of the Host, we may say : ‘By the blood of Jesus Christ, grant me to love Thee in this life and in the next.’

When the priest communicates, make the spiritual communion thus : ' My Jesus, I love Thee, and I long for Thee in my soul ; I embrace Thee, and wish never more to be separated from Thee.'

V. In addition to this, read some spiritual book for half an hour, or at least a quarter ; and it will be best to make use of the lives of the saints.

VI. Moreover, do not fail to pay every day a visit to the most holy Sacrament, when you should make at least the following acts : 1, ' O Lord, I thank Thee for Thy love in leaving Thyself to me in this holy Sacrament ;' 2, ' With my whole heart I love Thee, O Good above all other good ; and because I love Thee, I am sorry for all my offences against Thee, whether great or small ;' 3, ' I beseech Thee to grant me perseveranee in Thy grace and Thy holy love.' At the same time make a visit to our Blessed Lady, before one of her images, and beg of her also the same graces of perseverance and the love of God.

VII. In the evening make the examination of conscience, and then add the Christian acts.

VIII. Frequent the holy Sacraments of confession and communion at least once a week, and oftener if possible. With regard to confession, say beforehand : ' I thank Thee, O my God, for having waited for me until now ! I hope, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of all my offences against Thee ! I am sorry for them, and repent of them with my whole heart, because by them I have lost heaven and have deserved hell ; but above all, I am grieved to my inmost soul, and hate and detest my sins more than all evils, because they have offended Thy infinite goodness. I purpose in future rather to die than offend Thee any more.'

After confession, thank Almighty God for the pardon which you hope to have received, and renew your good resolution never more to offend Him, and to avoid all occasions of sin ; and pray to Jesus and Mary for perseverance.

As to the Holy Communion, we must know that it is the grand medicine, as the Council of Trent terms it, which purifies us from our daily venial faults, and preserves

us from mortal ones. He who communicates most frequently will be freest from sin, and will make farthest progress in Divine love ; only let him communicate with a good desire. But, in order to derive more abundant fruits from communion, he should manage to spend half an hour after receiving in producing devout acts, or at least in praying out of some spiritual book ; however, let no one make this more frequent communion without the counsel of his spiritual director, and on this account ;

IX. It is well to make choice of a good confessor, and to follow his direction in all spiritual matters, and even in temporal matters of importance ; nor should he be left without a good reason. St. Philip Neri spoke thus : ‘ Let those who are desirous of advancing in the way of God, put themselves under an enlightened confessor ; and let them obey him, as occupying the place of God. Whoever does this, may feel assured that he will never have to render an account to God of what he does.’ And this is only conformable to the words of Jesus Christ, that whosoever hears His ministers, hears Himself : “ He that heareth you, heareth Me.” A general confession should be made, if it has not hitherto been made, for it is a most excellent means of bringing one’s life into good order ; and it is advisable to make it to the director himself, that he may be the better able to guide us.

X. Avoid idleness, dissipated companions, immodest conversations, and more than all, evil occasions, especially where there is danger of incontinency ; and for this reason one cannot be too cautious in keeping his eyes from dwelling on any dangerous objects. For a person that does not avoid the voluntary occasions of sin, especially those which have frequently proved fatal to his innocence, it is morally impossible to persevere in the grace of God : “ He that loves the danger shall perish in it.”

XI. In temptations trust not to yourself, nor to all the good resolutions and promises which you have made, but rely solely on the Divine assistance ; and for this reason have immediate recourse to God and the Blessed Virgin. Especially in temptations against purity, the greatest care must be taken not to remain to dispute with the temp-

tation. In such moments some are accustomed to set their will to make acts of the contrary virtue; but they run considerable risk. The best plan to adopt on these occasions is to renew the firm purpose rather to die than to offend God, and forthwith to make the sign of the cross without remonstrance, and to call on God and the Divine Mother, making frequent invocations of the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, which have a wonderful efficacy against filthy suggestions, and should therefore be invoked continually till the temptations are over. Of ourselves we have not strength to overcome the attacks of the flesh, our most cruel enemy; but God readily supplies the strength to all who ask Him; but he that fails to do so, almost invariably falls a prey to the enemy. The same is to be observed in combating temptations against faith, protesting at such times, without remaining in dispute, that we are ready to die for the holy faith; and instead of then eliciting acts of faith, it is better to elicit other acts, as of love, contrition, and hope.

XII. If you commit a venial fault, make an act of the love of God and of contrition, purpose amendment, and forthwith resume your wonted tranquillity. To remain troubled after a fault is the greatest fault that a person can commit, for a troubled soul is incapable of doing the least good. If, by mischance, the fault has been grievous, then immediately make an act of contrition (which is sufficient to recover the Divine grace), resolve never to be guilty of the same again, and take the first opportunity of going to confession.

XIII. Endeavour to hear all the sermons in your power. And it would be most advisable to make a spiritual retreat once a year in some religious house; or if that be impracticable, at least in your own house, by applying yourself for eight days to prayer and spiritual reading, during this time all company and conversation on secular matters should be avoided. In like manner make a retreat of one day every month, with confession and communion. If your state of life allow it, become a member of some confraternity in which the Sacraments are frequented, and there make your eternal salvation the grand and sole aim.

Whoever enters a confraternity for the sake of managing, directing, or out of party spirit, will derive more harm than good from it. If a person would really profit by it, he must enter it solely with a view to his spiritual interests.

XIV. In all the vicissitudes of life, such as illnesses, losses, and persecutions, be ever mindful **to** bow with resignation to the will of God, and repose on these words : 'God wills it so, and so I will it likewise.' Or thus : 'God will have it so ; so be it done.' He that behaves in this manner stores up immense rewards for heaven, and always lives in peace. On the contrary, he that refuses to bow to the will of God only redoubles his afflictions ; for he must endure them whether he will or no ; and moreover, by his impatience, he lays up for himself an additional punishment.

XV. Be especially careful to preserve a tender and marked devotion to most holy Mary, by performing daily in her honour some exercise of piety. Never omit—the first thing in the morning and the last at night—to say three times the *Hail Mary* in honour of her purity, imploring her to keep you from all sin. Read every day something, be it only a few lines, on the Blessed Virgin. Say her Litanies, and the Rosary, meditating on the **my-**steries. When you leave or enter the house, ask her blessing with a *Hail Mary* ; and on passing by any of her images, salute her in the same way. When the clock strikes, say the *Hail Mary* ; and then, 'Jesus and Mary, I love you ! Do not permit me to offend you.' With the advice of your confessor, fast on Saturdays, on the vigils of the seven festivals of our Blessed Lady, and make the novenas for the said feasts ; as also for Christmas, Pentecost, and for the feast of your patron saint.

Necessary advice for people of all states of life, that they may secure their salvation.

God wishes us all to be saved : "Who will have all men saved" (1 Tim ii. 4). And He is ready to give to all the help necessary for salvation ; but He grants it only to **those that** ask Him, as St. Augustine says : 'He gives only to

those who ask.' Hence, it is a common opinion of theologians and of the holy fathers, that prayer is necessary for adults as a means of salvation; that is to say, that a person who does not pray, and neglects to ask of God the help requisite for overcoming temptations, and for preserving grace already received, cannot be saved.

On the other hand, our Lord cannot refuse to give graces to those who ask for them, because He has promised to do so: "Cry to Me, and I will hear thee" (Jer. xxxiii. 3). Have recourse to Me, and I will not fail to hear you. Ask of Me all you desire, and you shall attain it: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (St. Matt. vii. 7). These promises, however, are not to be understood with reference to temporal goods, because God only gives these when they are for the good of the soul; but He has promised absolutely to give spiritual graces to any one who asks Him; and having promised it, He is obliged to give them to us: 'By His promise, He has made Himself our debtor,' says St. Augustine.

It should also be observed, that on God's part prayer is a promise, and on our part a binding precept: "Ask, and it shall be given you." "We ought always to pray" (St. Luke xviii. 1). These words, 'ask, we ought,' convey, as St. Thomas teaches, a grave precept, which is binding for our whole life; but especially when a man is in danger of death, of falling into sin; because if he does not then have recourse to God, he will certainly be overcome. And he who has already fallen under God's displeasure, commits a fresh sin, when he does not turn to God for help to arise out of his miserable state. But will God then hear him while he is yet His enemy? Yes, He does hear, if the sinner humbles himself, and prays for pardon from his heart; since it is written in the Gospel, "For every one that asketh, receiveth" (St. Luke xi. 10). It says that God has promised to hear all that pray to Him, whether they are just or sinners. In another place God says, "Call upon Me . . . and I will deliver Thee" (Ps. xlix. 15). Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee from hell, to which thou dost stand condemned.

No, there will be no excuse in the day of judgment

for any one who dies in mortal sin. It will be of **no use** for him to say that he had not strength to resist the temptation which troubled him; because Jesus Christ will answer: If you had not the strength, why did you not ask it of Me, and I should certainly have given it you? If you fell into sin, why did you not have recourse to Me, that I might have delivered you from it?

You see, then, that if you desire to be saved, and would keep yourself in the grace of God, you must often pray to Him, that He would keep His hand over you. The Council of Trent declares that for a man to persevere in the grace of God, it is not enough that he should have only that general aid which He gives to all; but he must also have that special assistance which can only be obtained by prayer. For this reason all the doctors of the Church say, that each one is bound, under grievous sin, to recommend himself often to God, and to ask for the grace of holy perseverance at least once a month. And any one who finds himself in the midst of many dangerous occasions is under the obligation of asking more frequently for the grace of perseverance.

It is besides most useful to keep up some particular devotion to the Mother of God, who is called the Mother of perseverance, in order to obtain this grace; and a person who has not this special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, will find it very difficult to persevere; for as St. Bernard says, all Divine graces, and especially this one of perseverance, which is the greatest of all, come to us by means of Mary.

Would to God that preachers were more mindful in putting before their hearers this great means of prayer! Some even in the whole course of their Lent sermons scarcely mention it more than once or twice in passing: while they ought often to make it their chief subject, besides speaking of it in every discourse; if they omit to do so, they will have to render a heavy account for it to God. Thus also many confessors are particular merely about the resolution their penitents make not to offend God again; and few take the trouble to inculcate that they must pray when they are tempted again to fall; but we must be well per-

suaded, that when a temptation is violent, if the penitent does not beg for God's assistance, all his resolutions will avail him little; prayer alone can save him. It is certain that he who prays is saved; he who prays not is damned.

Therefore, I repeat, if you wish to be saved, pray continually to the Lord that He would give you light and strength not to fall into sin. Thus we must be importunate with God, in asking Him for His grace. 'This importunity with God, is our opportunity,' says St. Jerome. Every morning we must beseech Him to keep us from sin during that day. And when any bad thought or occasion of sin presents itself to your mind (or you are tempted by some dangerous occasion), immediately have recourse to Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin, and say, 'My Jesus, help me! most blessed Virgin come to my aid!' It is enough at such a time to pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary, and the temptation will vanish; but should the temptation continue, persevere in invoking the assistance of Jesus and Mary, and you will be victorious.

Rules for a good life.

I. In the morning, on rising from bed, to make the Christian acts. Every day to make mental prayer for half an hour; to read at least for a quarter of an hour some spiritual book. To hear Mass. To make the visit to the most blessed Sacrament and to the Divine Mother. To say the Rosary. And in the evening to make the examination of conscience, with the act of contrition, and the Christian acts, together with the Litanies of the ever-blessed Mary.

II. To go to confession and communion at least every week, and oftener if possible, with the advice of your spiritual director.

III. To choose a good, learned, and pious confessor, and to be directed always by him, as well in your exercises of devotion, as in all affairs of importance, and not to leave him without a good reason.

IV. To avoid idleness, bad companions, immodest conversations, and above all occasions of sin, especially where there is danger of incontinency.

V. In temptations of impurity particularly, to sign yourself immediately with the sign of the holy cross, and to invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, as long as the temptation lasts.

VI. When you commit any sin, to repent of it at once, and resolve to amend; and if it is a grievous sin, to confess it as soon as possible.

VII. To hear sermons as often as you can, and to belong to some confraternity, with no other end than to attend to the affair of your eternal salvation.

VIII. To fast in honour of the ever-blessed Mary on Saturday, and on the vigils of her seven feasts, observing some other corporal mortification, according to the advice of your spiritual father, to make the novenas, of the above-named feasts of Mary, as well as of the Nativity, Pentecost, and that of your holy patron. In adverse circumstances, as in sickness, losses, persecutions, you must unite yourself in all things to the will of God, and be resigned; saying always: 'This is (or has been) the will of God; may His will be done!'

IX. To make the spiritual exercises every year in some religious house, or in some place apart; or at least to make them in your own house, applying yourself during those days as much as possible to prayer, spiritual reading, and to silence. And in the same way to make a day of retreat every month, by going to Communion, and by avoiding all conversation.

An epitome of the virtues in which a Christian soul, that desires to lead a perfect life and become a saint, should exercise itself.

It would be useful to read this epitome every time you make your day's retreat, that you may see in what virtues you are wanting.

To desire always to increase in love towards Jesus Christ. Holy desires are wings with which souls fly to God. St. Aloysius Gonzaga made himself a saint in a short time, through the great desire he had of loving God; and as he knew he should never be able to love Him as much as He was worthy of being loved, he consumed himself in ardent desires. On this account, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi called St. Aloysius a martyr of love.

To meditate often on the Passion of Jesus Christ. St. Bonaventure said that the wounds of Jesus Christ are wounds which pierce every heart, and inflame them with holy love.

Often during the day to make acts of love towards Jesus Christ, beginning from the time you wake in the morning, and trying to make an act of love as you fall asleep. Acts of love, says St. Teresa, are the fuel with which the fire of Divine love is kept burning in our hearts.

Always to ask Jesus Christ to give you His holy love. The grace of loving God, as wrote St. Francis of Sales, is the grace which contains and brings along with it all the other graces; because he who truly loves God, will endeavour to avoid any thing that might be displeasing to Him, and will study how to please Him in all things. It is, therefore, necessary above all things to ask of God the grace to love Him.

To frequent the holy Communion. A soul can do nothing that is more pleasing to God than to communicate in a state of grace. The reason of this is, that love tends to perfect union with the object beloved; as then Jesus Christ loves a soul that is in grace with an immense love; He ardently desires to unite Himself with it. This is what holy Communion does; by it Jesus Christ is wholly united to the soul: "He that eats My flesh dwells in Me, and I in him." Consequently the soul can perform no action that is dearer to Jesus Christ, than that of receiving Him in the holy Eucharist. For this reason let spiritual souls endeavour to communicate many times in the week, and if possible every day, but always with the permission of their director; for communions and mortifications done out of a person's own head, lead to pride rather than spirituality. For the rest, the penitent should earnestly ask his director both for communions and mortifications; because directors are induced to grant them, more or less frequently, according to the greater or less desire of them which they discover in their penitents.

To make during the day many spiritual communions; at least three.

Often to visit the most holy Sacrament of the altar, at

least once or twice a day; and in the visit, after the acts of faith, of thanksgiving, of love and contrition, to ask fervently for perseverance and holy love.

When disturbances, losses, affronts, or other adverse things happen, to have recourse to the ever-blessed Sacrament, at least in spirit, if you cannot go to the church.

Every morning on getting up to offer yourself to God to suffer in peace, and to accept from His hands all the crosses which shall befall you on that day; embracing also in peace all contradictions. *Fiat voluntas tua.* is the word which is constantly in the mouths of the saints: **Lord,** may Thy will be always done!

To be glad, and to rejoice that God is infinitely happy and blessed. If we love God more than ourselves, as we are bound to love Him, we ought to rejoice more at God's happiness than at our own.

To desire heaven and death, that we may be delivered from the danger we are in of losing God, and to go and love Jesus Christ with all our strength and for ever, without the fear of losing Him again.

Often to speak with others of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us, and of the love we owe to Him.

To go to God without reserve, not denying Him any thing which we know to be pleasing to Him; but rather choosing such things as are most agreeable to Him.

To desire and endeavour to persuade all to love Jesus Christ.

Always to pray for the souls in purgatory, and for poor sinners.

To drive away from your heart all affections that have not God for their object.

Often to have recourse to the saints, and especially to the ever-blessed Mary, that they may obtain for you the love of God.

To honour Mary in order to please God.

To do all your actions with the sole end of pleasing Jesus Christ; saying at the commencement of each action: O Lord, let it be all for Thee!

To offer yourself many times during the day to God

and to Jesus Christ, as willing to suffer any pain for His love, and say: My Jesus, I give myself all to Thee; here I am, do with me what Thou wilt.

To be resolved to die a thousand times rather than commit a deliberate sin, even though only a venial one.

To deny yourself even lawful satisfactions; doing so at least once or twice a day.

When we hear people talk of riches, honours, and amusements of the world, let us remember that all things have an end, and let us then say: My God, I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more!

To make two hours of mental prayer, or at least one hour during the day.

To make use of all those external mortifications which obedience permits; but to pay particular attention to interior mortification, such as abstaining from gratifying our curiosity, from answering when we are reproached, from saying witty things, and the like, and never to do any thing for your own satisfaction.

Whatever devout exercise you may perform, to do it as if it was the last time you had to do it. To this end in your meditation you should often think of death; and when you go to bed, think that you will one day there expire.

Not to leave off your usual devotions, or any other good work, on account of any aridity or weariness that you may experience. He who begins to leave them off for a slight cause is in danger of giving them up entirely.

Not to leave undone any good action out of human respect. Not to complain in sickness of any want of attention on the part of the doctors, servants, or assistants, and to try and conceal even our sufferings as much as we can. To love solitude and silence, in order to be able to discourse with God alone. And for this reason we must shun the conversations of this world.

To drive away sadness, preserving our tranquillity, and a cheerful countenance in all events with a constant uniformity. One who wills what God wills should never be afflicted.

To recommend yourself often to spiritual persons.

Always to have recourse immediately to Jesus and

Mary with great confidence in your temptations; continuing to pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary as long as the temptation lasts.

To have great confidence, first in the Passion of Jesus Christ, and then, in the intercession of Mary; and to ask God every day to give you this confidence.

After a fault, not to be disturbed and never to despair, even though you should know yourself to be wanting in fidelity, and should fall over and over again into the same fault; but to repent immediately, and to renew your promise of amendment, with confidence in God.

To render good to any one who does you evil, or at least to pray to the Lord for him.

To answer with meekness when any one says or does any thing to injure you; and so you will gain him over to you. Moreover, when you feel yourself annoyed, it is well to be silent until you are composed, otherwise you will commit many faults without perceiving it.

When you have to correct any one, you should choose a time when neither you nor the person who is to be corrected are excited, otherwise the correction will prove more hurtful than useful.

To speak well of all; and to excuse the intention, when you cannot justify the action.

To help your neighbour as much as you can, especially one who has been opposed to you.

Not to say or do any thing that may be displeasing to any one; and except it were necessary in order to please God rather than men.

And if sometimes you are wanting in charity towards any one, ask his pardon, or at least speak kindly to him.

To speak always with meekness, and in a low voice.

To offer to God the contempt you meet with, and not to complain afterwards to others of it.

To observe carefully the rules given you by your director.

To consider and honour in your superiors the person of Jesus Christ Himself.

To love the most humble employments.

To choose the poorest things for yourself.

To obey without replying, and without showing repugnance; and, on the other hand, not to ask any thing for your own satisfaction.

Not to speak of yourself, whether it be good or evil; sometimes to speak in disparagement of ourselves fosters pride.

To humble yourself even towards your inferiors.

Not to excuse yourself when you are reprov'd or calumniated, unless it should be absolutely necessary for the common good, or to avoid giving scandal to others.

To visit and assist the sick as much as possible; and especially the most abandoned.

Often to say to yourself: If I wish to become a saint, I must suffer; if I wish to please God, I must do His will, and not my own.

Always to renew your resolution of becoming a saint, and not to lose courage in whatever state of tepidity you may find yourself.

To renew each day the resolution you have taken of going on to perfection.

Let religious endeavour every day to renew the vows of their profession. The doctors of the Church say, that a person who renews his vows of religion gains a plenary indulgence, as he does the first time he makes them.

The exercise which is most essential to be practised by a soul that desires to please God, is to conform itself in all things to the Divine will, and to embrace with peace all things which are contrary to the senses in pains, sicknesses, affronts, contradictions, loss of property, the death of relations or of other persons who are dear to us; and to receive them each day as we awake as coming from God. Tribulations are those blessed treasures where the saints find such stores of merits. We cannot give greater glory to God than by conforming ourselves in all things to His holy will. This is the continual practice of devout souls. And it is the end to be attained by mental prayer. St. Teresa says: 'That all that a person who gives himself up to prayer ought to seek is conformity to the Divine will; and let him be sure that in this consists the highest perfection.' This then must be our only intention in all our

actions, in our meditations, and in our prayers ; we must always pray :—" O Lord, teach me to do Thy will." " Tell me, Lord, what Thou dost desire of me, and I will do it all." " Thy will be done." Such is the prayer continually on the lips of the saints. And this is all that God requires of us : " My son, give me thy heart."

But perfection consists in conforming ourselves to the will of God in those things which are disagreeable to us. The Ven. F. Avila said : ' It is of more use to say once, blessed be God in any contradiction, than to thank Him six thousand times when we are pleased.' We must also be conformed to those crosses which come to us by means of others, as in calumniations, deceptions, and contempt, because it all comes from God. Not that the Lord then wills the fault of the person who offends us, but He does will that we should be humble and mortified : " Good things and evil are from God" (Ecclus. xi. 14). We call tribulations evils and misfortunes ; and we make them so by suffering them with impatience ; but if we received them with resignation, they would become graces and jewels to enrich our crown in heaven. In a word, he who is always united to the will of God becomes a saint, and enjoys even here on earth a perpetual peace : " Whatever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad" (Prov. xii. 21).

To recommend ourselves to the prayers of devout people ; but still more to recommend ourselves to the saints in heaven, and especially to the ever-blessed Mary, setting great value on devotion towards this Divine Mother ; and not omitting any opportunity of inducing others to practise it. Those who have a great confidence in the patronage of Mary, ought to be very grateful to God for it, for it is a great pledge of their salvation ; and those who have it not, ought to pray that He would grant it to them.

Spiritual maxims for a Christian.

Of what use will it be to gain the whole world, and to lose our soul ?

Every thing has an end ; but eternity has no end.

All may be lost, provided God be not lost.

No sin, however small, is a light evil.

If we desire to please God, we must deny ourselves.

That which is done for our own satisfaction is all loss.

In order to save ourselves we must be in constant fear of falling.

Let me die, so that I please God.

The only evil we ought to fear is sin. All that God wills is good, and therefore to be desired.

He who desires nothing but God, is happy and contented at every thing that happens.

I ought to imagine to myself that there are no others in the world but God and myself.

The whole world cannot satisfy our heart; God alone can satisfy it.

All good consists in loving God. And loving God consists in doing His will.

All our riches are in prayer. He who prays obtains every thing he can wish for.

Let us consider that day lost on which we omit our mental prayer. 'He who leaves off praying' (said St. Teresa) 'casts himself into hell of his own accord.'

Let us not pass a day without reading some spiritual book.

Points of honour are the plague of spirituality.

To be humble of heart, and not merely in word, it is not sufficient to say that we are deservng of all contempt, but we must also be glad when we are despised. And what has a Christian learnt to do, if he cannot suffer an affront for God's sake? When you are insulted, take it all cheerfully.

He who thinks on hell, which he has deserved, finds every trouble easy to bear.

He who loves poverty possesses all things. In the things of this world we must choose the worst, in the things of God we must choose the best.

An obedient soul is the delight of God.

True charity consists in doing good to those who do us evil, and thus to gain them over.

Of what use are the riches and honours of this world at the hour of death?

It is a great grace of God to be called to His holy love.

God does not leave a single good desire unrewarded.

All attachment, even to good things (except to God), is bad.

Let us be grateful, and first of all to God. Let us therefore resolve to deny Him nothing, making choice of those things which are most pleasing to Him.

The most beautiful prayer is when in sickness, we unite ourselves to the will of God.

A holy life and sensual pleasures cannot agree together.

He who trusts in himself is lost; he who trusts in God can do all things.

And what greater delight can a soul have than to know that it is pleasing God.

God is ready to give Himself to those who leave all for His love.

The only way by which we can become saints is the way of suffering.

It is by aridity and temptations that God tries those who love Him.

No one can be lost who loves God and trusts in Him.

Let us beg of God to give us a tender devotion to His Divine Mother.

He who looks on Jesus crucified suffers every thing in peace.

He who loves God most in this world is the happiest. All that is not done for God, turns to pain.

No kind of inquietude, although for a good end, comes from God.

It is enough that we do not stand still; we shall arrive in the end.

He who desires God alone, is rich and happy: he is in want of nothing, and may laugh at all the world.

Nothing can satisfy one whom God does not satisfy.

God, God, and nothing more.

We must overcome all to gain all.

rious reflections to excite in us the holy love of God, and devotion to Mary.

God is a treasury of all grace, of all good, of all perfection.

God is infinite, God is eternal, God is immense, God is unchangeable.

God is powerful, God is wise, God is provident, God is just.

God is merciful, God is holy, God is beautiful, God is brightness itself, God is rich, God is all things, and He is therefore worthy of love; and of how much love!

God is infinite; He gives to all, and receives nothing from any one. All that we have comes to us from God; but God has nothing from us: "Thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods" (Ps. xv. 1).

God is eternal; He has ever been eternal, and always shall be. We can count the years and the days of our existence; but God knows no beginning, and will never have an end: "But Thou art always the selfsame, and Thy years shall not fail" (Ps. ci. 28).

God is immense, and is essentially present in every place. We, when we are in one place, cannot be in another. But God is in all places, in heaven, on earth, in the sea, in the depths, without us, and within us. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there: if I descend into hell, Thou art present" (Ps. cxxxviii. 7, 8).

God is unchangeable; and all that He has ordained by His holy will from eternity, He wills now, and will do so for ever. "For I am the Lord, and I change not" (Mal. iii. 6).

God is powerful; and with respect to God, all the power of creatures is but weakness.

God is wise; and with respect to God, all human wisdom is ignorance.

God is provident; and with respect to God, all human foresight is ridiculous.

God is just; and with respect to God, all human justice is defective: "And in His angels He found wickedness" (Job iv. 18).

God is merciful; and with respect to God, all human clemency is imperfect.

God is holy; in comparison with God, all human sanctity, though it be heroic, falls short in an infinite degree. "None is good but God alone" (St. Luke xviii. 19).

God is beauty itself; yes, how beautiful is God! and with respect to God, all human beauty is deformity.

God is brightness itself; and with respect to God, all human brightness, even that of the sun, is darkness.

God is rich; and with respect to God, all human riches is poverty.

God is all things; and with respect to God, the highest, the most sublime, the most admirable of created things, and even if they were all united in one, are as nothing: "All men are as nothing before Thee" (Ps. xxxviii. 6). He is, therefore, worthy of love; and, oh, of how much! Ah, God is worthy of so much love, that all the angels, and all the saints of Paradise do nothing but love God, and they will throughout all eternity be occupied only in loving Him; and in this love of God, they are and will be always happy.

Ah, God is so worthy of love, that He is obliged to love Himself with an infinite love; and in this same love, so necessary, but at the same time so delightful, which God bears to Himself, consists His beatitude! And shall we not love Him?

How did the saints love Him?

St. Francis Xavier used to loosen his clothes and throw himself on the ground, not being able to stand against the impulse of holy love.

St. Stanislaus Kostka bared his breast, and used to run to fountains to refresh himself with the water.

The heart of St. Philip Neri became sensibly enlarged by the force of holy love.

St. Francis of Sales said, that if he had known that there was the smallest fibre in his heart that was not saturated with Divine love, he would have wished to tear it out at once, and to cast it far from him.

And St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and other souls like them, were often in

transports, and ravished as it were through the violence of the holy love of God ; and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, not satisfied with loving Him so much herself, sometimes went about her convent, in order to give vent to her love, crying with a loud voice, ‘ Love is not loved ; Love is not loved.’ And shall we then not love Him ?

Do you know why we do not love Him ? It is because we know Him so little. The saints, who knew Him better than we do, loved Him so much. Let us then also try to know Him a little more.

Let us meditate from time to time on His Divine attributes, on His Divine perfections ; let us at least, from time to time, raise our minds by a simple glance to Him, in the way I have here proposed, and our hearts will also become inflamed with this holy Divine love.

It is condescension in so great a God, that He should permit Himself to be loved by such vile creatures as we are ; and it is also His sweet commandment.

When God gave Moses His law on the top of Mount Sinai, before giving Him any other precept, He taught him this (Deut. vi. 5) : “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength.” And He enjoined him first of all to imprint well these words in his own heart : “ And these words shall be in thy heart ;” and afterwards to promulgate them with ardour among the children of Israel : “ And thou shalt tell them to thy children ” Let us also love Him as He deserves ; let us fulfil perfectly this His precept, which is at the same time so noble and so sweet ; which is in fine the first and greatest precept of the law : “ This is the greatest and the first commandment ” (St. Matt. xxii. 38). And let us live and die in the fulfilment of this precept.

Sure signs by which we may know whether we have the Divine love in us.

Divine love is compared in the Scriptures to fire.

Our Lord, in declaring to us in the Gospel, that He had come on earth to bring down the Divine love, expresses Himself by saying, that He had come on earth to

bring fire : "I am come to cast fire on the earth" (St. Luke xii. 49). And God Himself, in the Apocalypse, counsels a soul to provide itself with burnt gold : "I counsel thee, O soul, to buy of me gold fire-tried" (Apoc. iii. 18); that is, Divine love.

Now fire has these two properties, it resists what is contrary to itself—I mean to say, that instead of being put out by winds and gusts, it is thereby augmented; and it is operative—if it is fire it will act. Here are, therefore, two sure signs, by which we may find out if we have in ourselves the holy love of God—works and patience.

Do we always work for our God, at least by means of a pure right intention of doing His Divine will in all things, of finding His Divine good pleasure in all things? Do we voluntarily suffer for His sake every thing that is against our inclination, poverty, tribulations, sickness, and every thing else? And instead of such things making us go far from Him, do they bring us nearer to Him? If they do, then we have the holy love of God. Our love is a fire which acts, which opposes what is contrary to itself, otherwise we have it not; our love towards God will be not true, but false; it will be a love of the lips, but not of the heart. St. John also warns us against this in his second epistle, chap. iii. 18 : "My little children (see how he makes use of the very expressions of love) let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

St. Gregory says, 'If there is no work, there is no love.' And Jesus Christ : "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them" (he who keeps My commandments and observes them faithfully), "he it is that loveth Me." And St. Augustine adds : 'The bitterest and most disagreeable things are rendered comparatively easy, and almost of no account, by love.' So that if we always act in the manner laid down above,—that is, for our God,—if we keep His Divine commandments, if we observe them faithfully (and with the Divine commandments come also those of the holy Church, the obligations of our state, and each one's own duty), if we overcome with generosity and even with cheerfulness, for our God, every thing that is **contrary** to our nature, though it be most distasteful to us,

we have in us the holy love of God. Our love is then a fire which acts, which resists what is contrary to itself; otherwise we have it not: our love towards God will certainly not be true, but false; it will be a love of the lips, not a love of the heart: 'My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'

Let us give some more practical example. Suppose you have an opportunity of making such and such profit, but it is dishonest to do so; or an opportunity occurs for you to indulge yourself in some pleasure, but that pleasure is unlawful; the duties of your state trouble you, or the labours of your employment weary you; and for the sake of your God you do not care to make that profit, you renounce that pleasure, do your duty, and continue your work,—then you have the holy love of God, your love is a fire which operates; otherwise you have it not, your love towards God will not be true love, but false; it will be a love of the lips, and not a love of the heart: 'My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'

Further, suppose some tribulation comes upon you suddenly, that an action is brought against you unexpectedly, on which all you have depends, that you suddenly lose some person in whom were all your hopes, and who was your whole support. Do you with promptness offer it all to our Lord; do you even bear all with joy? If so, you have the holy love of God. Your love is a fire which resists what is contrary to itself; otherwise you have it not: your love will not be true, it will be false—a love of the lips, not a love of the heart: 'My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'

But it is a still surer sign of love to suffer than to act; because in acting, a person employs himself in favour of the person beloved, and so far gives a sign of love; but in suffering, a person has no care for himself, and thinks of nothing but the person beloved, and therefore gives a sign of greater love. And by this mark God was pleased singularly to try the great love of holy Job towards Him.

The holy man Job was certainly a great lover of God;

but when did he show himself most truly to be so? **Was it** when he was surrounded by a numerous family? When he was in the enjoyment of an abundance of earthly goods? When he was in perfect health? Yes, even then; for even then he acknowledged that all came from God; he thanked Him for all these things, offered sacrifices, and fulfilled his duty; giving good advice to his sons, and by continually praying for them, that they might never sin and offend their Lord: "Lest, perhaps, my sons have sinned" (Job i. 5). But his love of God showed itself really great, when God, on purpose to try his great love for Him, despoiled him of all his possessions at once; caused all his sons to die at the same time; deprived him **entirely, in** one moment, of his health; so that he was reduced to such a state, that, covered with ulcers from head to foot, he sat on a dunghill, and scraped with a potsherd the corrupt matter from all his members;—with all these horrible misfortunes, and in the midst of all these unheard-of afflictions, he did nothing but repeat continually, with invincible, and more than wonderful patience, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so be it done; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21).

But why speak of the holy Job? Jesus Christ Himself said to His apostles, as He was going to His Passion: "That the world may know that I love the Father, &c. . . . Arise, let us go hence" (St. John xiv. 31). Here, then, we have the surest and most incontestable proof of the true love of God—patience, patience: the voluntary suffering any thing for Him.

The sayings and doings of the saints on this matter are also known to all.

St. Teresa said, 'either to suffer or to die;' St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, 'to suffer, and not to die;' St. John of the Cross, 'to suffer, and be silent.'

The holy martyrs invited their executioners to torment them, and the wild beasts to devour them.

St. Lidwina willingly suffered a painful illness for thirty-three years.

St. Frances Romana willingly suffered the unjust ba-

nishment of her husband, and the confiscation of all their property; and St. John of the Cross already named willingly endured a cruel imprisonment for nine months, with numberless other inconveniences and hardships.

See, see, the surest and most incontestable mark of the true love of God, patience, patience; suffering, willingly suffering every thing for Him.

And oh, happy and blessed is he who by these two sure marks of works and patience, of acting and suffering for our great God, shall discover in himself the holy love of God!

All the gold in the world, when compared to the smallest degree of the holy love of God, is nothing but a handful of sand: "All gold in comparison of her is as a little sand" (Wisd. vii. 9). All the riches even of the world, compared to the least degree of the holy love of God, are as nought, as the Wise Man says in the Scripture: "I esteemed riches nothing, in comparison of her" (Wisd. vii. 8).

But why talk about all the gold or all the riches of the world, while all the greatest of the supernatural gifts are worth nothing without the holy love of God? This is the language of the holy Apostle Paul, who possessed the holy love of God in such abundance, and who therefore so well knew its value (1 Cor. xiii.).

If, said he, I had the gift of all tongues, and could speak not only in all the languages of men, but also in that wonderful language with which the angels speak to each other: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels;" and had not the holy love of God, "and have not charity," I should be no better than a cymbal that was out of tune: "I am become as sounding brass or as a tinkling cymbal."

If I had the highest gift of prophecy, so that I could penetrate the depths of the most abstruse mysteries: "And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries;" if I had the gift of all sciences, and such a great faith that I could remove mountains from one place to another; "if I should have all knowledge, and all faith, so that I could remove mountains," and had not the holy love of God: "And have not charity;" I am good for nothing: I "am nothing."

This beautiful virtue of charity, or holy love of God, is the queen of all the other virtues, and reigns, and will reign, for all eternity.

After death faith will have its reward, because it will see that in which it has believed; but the virtue of faith will have no place in paradise.

After death hope will have its reward, because it will possess that which it hoped in; but there will be no virtue of hope in heaven. After death, charity or love towards God will have its reward, and will reign eternally, because with infinite beatitude it will continue to love throughout all eternity that same God which is loved here on earth.

Therefore, oh, how happy, oh, how blessed is he who, by these two most certain marks of works and patience, voluntarily acting and suffering for his God, is able to recognise in himself the holy and true love of God!

Let us, then, all love our God, and let us all love Him in the manner and according to the rule here given. In all our works let us have God before our eyes, in every thing fulfilling always His Divine will, His Divine good pleasure; and let us bear not only patiently but also joyfully all that is contrary to our self-love and to our human sensibilities.

It is for this one only end, that of loving our God, that we have been created and put into this world by Him.

To the accomplishment of this one only end let us turn all our care, all our solicitude.

On His love alone let us set any value, let us often ask Him to give us His holy love alone: 'Thy holy love alone' (let all and each of us say constantly); 'give us Thy holy love alone, O Lord, together with Thy holy grace, and I am rich enough; nor will I ask any thing else of Thee;' as that great saint who was so filled with the love of God, the great St. Ignatius, continually prayed.

A short act of perfect love towards God, to be repeated very often.

My God, I love Thee above all things, and in all things, with my whole soul, because Thou art worthy of all love!

Twelve short ejaculations for the twelve greatest solemnities in the year—seven of our Lord and five of the Blessed Virgin, which may be used at any other time and on any day, according to each one's devotion.

For the holy Nativity of our Lord.

Come, my Jesus, and be born in my heart!

For the Circumcision of our Lord.

May Thy name, O Jesus, be my joy!

For the Epiphany.

With Thy Magi, O Jesus, I adore Thee, and love Thee!

For Easter.

My Jesus, let me first suffer, and then rejoice with Thee.

For the Ascension of our Lord.

Take my heart also with Thee into heaven.

For Pentecost.

Holy Spirit, Light, Fervour, and Perseverance!

For the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Jesus, our food! Jesus, our sweetness! Jesus, our joy!

For the Immaculate Conception.

Most Holy Virgin, free from sin, and full of grace, at the first moment of thy existence, may I be free from sin, and in the grace of God, at the last moment of my life!

For the Nativity of the ever-blessed Virgin.

Thy birth, O Blessed Virgin, was holy; may my death be holy!

For the Annunciation.

O Virgin, ever blessed, thou art raised to the sublime dignity of Mother of God; may I remain always faithful in His service!

For the Purification.

Most holy Virgin, purer than the angels after thou hadst brought forth thy Son, may I be purified at least after I have sinned!

For the Assumption.

Most holy Virgin, who didst die out of pure love, may I at least die with contrition!

Let all, all be devout to the most blessed Virgin; and after God, let us honour the most holy Virgin.

Happy is the Christian who has the most blessed Virgin for him; and miserable is that Christian who has not the blessed Virgin on his side.

The most blessed Virgin can obtain every thing from God, because she is His true Mother, and is so much beloved by Him: and she will do every thing for us, because she is our Mother also, and loves us so much.

Let us therefore always try to gain her friendship more and more; let us ingratiate ourselves with her more and

more, by continually fostering in ourselves devotion towards her.

Every day let us say her Rosary.

Fast in her honour every Saturday.

Observe the novenas and the fast before all her principal feasts.

Practise some devotion also on all her smaller, even her smallest feasts.

And let us besides, in all our necessities, in all our misfortunes, have recourse to her, have confidence in her; and through her security in life, security in death, security throughout all eternity.

It must be so; for do you know what takes place in heaven? The most blessed Virgin stands before her Divine Son: *Mater stat ante Filium*; and she reminds Him of the womb, where He was enclosed for nine months, and the sacred breast, at which she so often gave Him suck: the Son places Himself before His Divine Father: *Filius stat ante Patrem*, and shows Him His pierced side and those sacred wounds which He received for our sake: *Et ostendit Patri latus et vulnera*; and at the sight of such sweet pledges of a Son's love, He can deny nothing to His Divine Son,—all is obtained for us: *Ibi nulla poterit esse repulsio, ubi sunt tot amoris insignia*; there can be no refusal where there are so many signs of love. It is thus that St. Bernard, himself so devout to the ever-blessed Virgin, encourages us.

But since the most blessed Virgin is also the Mother of fair love, as well as being true Mother of God: *Mater pulchræ delectionis*, she obtains for us holy love; and through her means God Himself fills our hearts with His holy love: *Ignem sui amoris accendat Deus in cordibus nostris*.

Live, Jesus our love, and Mary our hope!

THE AUTHOR'S PROTEST.

In obedience to the decrees of Urban VIII., I declare that I have no intention of attributing any other than a purely human authority to the miracles, revelations, favours, and particular cases recorded in this book; and the same as regards the titles of saints and blessed, applied to servants of God not yet canonised, except in those cases which have been confirmed by the Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Apostolic See, of which I declare myself to be an obedient son; and therefore I submit myself and all that I have written in this book to her judgment.

APPENDIX.

PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. S. Thom. Opusc. de duob. præcep. caritat. De dilectione Dei, c. iv.
2. Concil. Trident. sess. xiii. c. 2.
3. S. Bern. Sienn. t. ii. serm. 54, a. 1, c. 1.
4. S. Thom. 1a 2æ, q. 28, a. 1, ad 2.
5. S. Chrysost. Hom. 46, al. 45, in Joann.
6. S. Bern. Sienn. t. ii. serm. 54.
7. S. Thom. 3 p. q. 79, a. 4.
8. S. Buonavent. de profectu Religios. lib. ii. c. 77.
9. S. Franc. of Sales. Introd. Div. Life, pt. ii. c. 21.
10. Ap. Biosium. Conciav. Anim. Fidel. c. vi. 6.
11. S. Leo. Sermon. i. de Ascens. Bibl. Max. de la Bigne, t. vii.
12. S. Thom. Tract. de Virtut. art. 3.
13. S. Greg. Magn. Moral. l. x. c. 8.
14. Id. id.
15. S. Thom. 3 p. q. 79, a. 6. conci.
16. Id. In lib. iv. Sent. q. 3, a. 1, sol. 2.
17. S. Ambros. de Sacramentis, l. iv. c. 6.
18. S. Thom. 3 p. q. 80, a. 1, ad 3.
19. Id. 3 p. q. 39, a. 5.
20. Concil. Trident. Sess. vi. c. 13.
21. S. Aug. de dono persever. c. 6.
22. S. Aug. Serm. cx. de verb. Evang. Luc. c. 4.
23. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 178, a. 2, ad 1.
24. S. Bern. Serm. in Nat. B. V. M. de Aquæductu.
25. S. Hil. Comm. in S. Matt. c. 3, n. 5.
26. S. Aug. cont. Petil. lib. iiii. c. 7, n. 8.
27. * Id.
28. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 101, a. 4.
29. Id. 2a 2æ, q. 159, a. 10.
30. *Habert. de Ord. c. 1, § 2.
31. S. Bern. de consid. lib. ii. c. 11.
32. *St. John of the Cross, Tratt. delle spine t. 3, coil. 4, § 2, n. 8.
33. Ven. J. d'Avila. Let. xiii. ed. Migne.
34. S. Bern. Serm. xxi. in Cantic.
35. Id. Epist. c.
36. Id. Serm. iv. de Advent. Dora.
37. S. Thom. 1a 2æ, q. 40, a. 7, concl.
38. Id. id. q. 65, a. 5.
39. Id. in 3 sent. dist. 29, q. 1, a. 4.
40. Id. de Veritat. q. 23, a. 8.
41. Id. 2a 2æ, q. 24, a. 9.
42. S. Aug. Confess. lib. viii. c. 11.
43. Gotti, Theol. Schol. t. ii. tr. 6, q. 2, § 3, n. 30.
44. S. Jerome. Epist. xxii. ad Eustoch. 9. 2, ed Migne.
45. Theol. Moral. lib. vi. 476, Mech. ed.

TREATISE ON PRAYER.

1. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 17.
2. S. Aug. de nat. et grat. c. xvii. 19.
3. Lesslus de Justit. lib. ii. c. 37, dub. 3, n. 9.
4. In Concil. juris. can. 20. This canon is found in the Second Council of Orange, held under the pontificate of Boniface the Second. Vid. Dict. Concil.; Migne, and Ronrbacher's Hist. liv. 44.
5. Concil. Trident. sess. vi. can. 3.
6. *Opus imperfectum. Hom. xviii.
7. Gennadius. de Eccles. dogm. c. 26, int. opp. S. Aug. t. viii. app. ed. Ben.
8. S. Aug. de persever. c. xvi. 39.
9. S. Thom. 3 p. q. 39, a. 5.
10. Id. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 2.
11. S. Greg. Magn. 1al. lib. i. c. 8.
12. S. Thom. in loc. cit. a. 1.
13. S. Aug. in Ps. cii. f. 1119.

- 14.*S. Chrysost. Hom. lxxvii.
- 15.*S. Gelas. Ep. v. ad Episc. in Picaeno cont. Pelag.
16. Acta Eccles. Mediol. Litt. Pastor. dell' orazione commune, vol. ii. p. 866, ed. Patav. 1754.
17. S. Aug. de nat. et grat. c. 44, n. 50.
18. Concil. Trident. sess. vi. c. 11.
19. S. Aug. de nat. et grat. c. 69, n. 83.
20. Id. id. id. c. 16, n. 3.
- 21.* Id. in Ps. c. I have not been able to find the exact quotation; but the same in substance is to be found in Pss. lxxxiii. f. 886, cxviii. f. 1344, cxxix. f. 1456.
22. Id. serm. civi. de verb. Apost. Rom. viii. c. 3.
23. S. Bern. Serm. v. de Quadrages.
24. S. Thom. 1a 2æ q. 109, a. 4, ad 2.
25. S. Aug. de perfect. Justit. hom. c. iii. n. 6.
- 26.*S. Chrysost. Serm. de Moy.
27. Concil. Trident. sess. xxv. in decr. de invoc. S.
28. S. Thom. in 4 sent. dist. 45, q. 3, a. 2, ad 2.
29. Id. id. id. id.
30. Id. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 11, ad 3.
31. Bellarm. lib. ii. de Purg. c. 15.
*Sylvius in qu. 71, suppl. art. 6. Gotti. t. iii. tr. 14, q. 4, § 3, in fin. Lessius de Justit. lib. ii. 37, dub. 5, cum Sylv. Medina, etc.
32. S. Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xx. c. 9.
33. Id. in Ps. xxxvii. f. 295.
34. S. Thom. in 4 sent. dist. 21, q. 1, art. 1, quæstiunc. 11.
35. Id. id. id. q. 3.
- 36.*Dionys. Carthus. de noviss. l. 4, a. 19.
37. S. Cyril. in Ep. ad S. Aug. Ep. xix. c. 3, int. epp. S. Aug. app.
- 38.*Istor. dell' ord. Cisterc.
39. S. Buonavent. t. iii. Serm. de animabus. The passage referred to is as follows: "Tertio attendendum est debitum insolubile unde dicit, *Mendicitate*. Nam manente reatu peccati, et deficiente moneta meriti, non possunt solvere quod ab iis exigitur nisi per violentiam supplicii."
40. S. Thom. Quodlibet. ix. art. 16, ad 1.
41. S. Thom. in 4 sent. dist. 45, q. 4, a. 1, solut. ad q. 3.
42. Id. id. q. 3, a. 2.
- 43.*Continuator de Tourneley, t. 1, de rel. c. 2, de or. a. 4, q. 1. Cum Sylv.
- 44.*S. Thom.
45. S. Bern. Serm. in Dom. inf. oct. Assump.
46. Id. de Aquæductu.
47. S. Aug. de Sanct. Virgin. c. vi.
48. S. Bern. in loc. cit. de Aquæductu.
49. Natal. Alexand. Theol. Dogm. et Mor. t. 11, epist. 50, in calce. Paris. 1714.
50. Contensone Theolog. ment. et cord. t. 11, lib. x. c. 1.
- 51.*S. Anselm. de excellent. Virg.
52. S. Thom. 1a q. 25, a. 6, ad 4.
53. S. Hilar. Comm. in Matt. c. xviii. n. 5.
- 54.*S. Chrysost. Serm. i. de Mart.
- 55.*S. Laurent. Justin. de casto Conub. c. 12. "In officinâ quippe quietis, et per orationis infatigabile exercitium, secum habitare, mentisque arcem erigere, valet homo."
56. S. Bern. Serm. xlix. de modo ben. viv.
- 57.*S. Chrysost. in Ps. cxlv.
58. S. Buonavent. Diætæ Salut. tit. 2, c. 5.
59. S. Laurent. Justin. de perfect. c. 12.
- 60.*S. Chrysost. Serm. xlii.
61. Gotti. Theol. t. 11, tract. 6 de Grat. q. 2, § 3, n. 30.
- 62.*S. Aug. Serm. de orat.
63. S. Bern. Sienn. t. iv. Serm. i. in Dom. v. post Pasch.
- 64.*S. Chrysost. Hom. lii. in Matt.
- 65.*S. Buonavent. Comm. in Luc. c. xviii.
- 66.*S. Aug. in Ps. lxxv.
67. S. Isidore, lib. iii. sen. c. vii. 11.
68. S. Buonavent. de Prof. Relig. lib. ii. c. 68.
- 69.*S. Ambros. Ep. xlviii. ad Demet.
70. S. Bern. Serm. i. de S. And. in fin.
71. Id. iii. de Quadrag.
72. S. Basil. Const. Monast. c. 1, n. 5, ad fin. ed. Paris 1839.
73. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 7, ad 2.
74. Corn. a Lap. Syvest. Tolet. Harbert. et alii.
75. Calmet, in loc. cit. Comment. in Nov. Test.
76. S. Aug. tract. cii. in Joann.
77. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 6.
78. S. Aug. de corrept. et grat. c. 1.
79. Id. Serm. lxxvi. de verb. Dom. Matt. xiv.
80. S. Aug. in Ps. lxx. f. 719.
81. Blossius. conclav. an fidel. p. ii. c. 3, 1.
82. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 15, ad 3.
83. S. Bern. Serm. iii. de Annunc. B. V. M.
- 84.* Ap. S. Thom. erud. ad princip. c. 5.
85. S. Bern. in loc. cit. The same occurs in St. Cyprian (treatise i.) "The spirit is poured forth liberally . . . It flows on without stop, it flows over without stint. We have only to present to it an open and thirsting breast; *what measure we bring thither of faith to hold, so much do we drink in of grace to inundate.*"
86. S. Basil. Const. Monast. in loc. cit.
87. S. Aug. Serm. lxi. de verb. Dom. Matt. vii.
88. Id. Serm. de beato Tobia, in Append.

89. Id. in Ps. lxxv. f. 654, in fin.
90. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 15.
91. *Opus imperfectum Hom. lviil.
92. *S. Chrysost. Hom. lvi.
93. * Id.
94. S. Basil. Const. Monast. c. 1, n. 4.
95. S. Greg. Magn. in Ps. vi. pœnitent. in princip.
96. S. Jerome. Ep. ad Damas. de fil. prodig. Ep. xxii. ed. Migne.
97. S. Aug. Tract. xlii. in Joann.
98. S. Thom. 2a 2æ, q. 83, a. 16.
99. Id. ad 2.
100. *S. Chrysost. Serm. de Moys.
101. * Id. Hom. xxiii. in Matt.
102. Concil. Trident. Sess. vi. c. 13.
103. S. Aug. de don. persever. c. 6.
104. S. Thom. 3 p. q. 39, a. 5, concl.
105. S. Nilus. de Orat. c. 32. Bibl. Max. de la Bigne, t. vii. "Ne petas a Deo impetiosè quod statim velis impetrare; vult enim diutius te beneficio afficere in oratione perseverantem. Quid enim excellentius quam cum Deo colloqui et usu ejus detineri?"
106. *S. Greg. Magn. Hom. i. in Evang.
107. *S. Jerome. in Luc. xi.
108. S. Aug. Serm. lxi. alias v. de verb. Dom.
109. S. Chrysost. Hom. xxx. 6, in cap. xi. Genes. t. iv. ed. Montf.
110. Id. in Ps. iv. t. v.
111. Id. Hom. xxiii. al. xxiv. in Matt. vii. t. vii.
112. S. Buonavent. Serm. de Sanctis in commun. Serm. v. de uno confess.
113. Ven. Beda. Serm. xviii. de SS.
114. Tourneley, Præl. Theo. lib. iii. q. 3, p. 102. ubi agit. de Prædest.
115. Concil. Trident. Sess. vi. c. 2.
116. S. Prosp. Resp. ad 2, object. Vincent. int. op. S. Aug. t. x. app. p. 141.
117. S. Chrysost. in 1 Tim. ii. Hom. vii. t. xi.
118. S. Aug. in Enchirid. c. 102, n. 16.
119. S. Thom. in 1 sent. dist. 47, a. 1, sol. et 46, art. 1, sol.
120. S. Joann. Damasc. lib. ii. c. 29, de fide orthodox.
121. S. Thom. in S. Jo. Ev. c. vi. lect. 4, et in 1 Tim. c. 2, lect. 1.
122. Id. in Ep. ad Heb. c. xii. lect. 3.
123. Id. in 1 sent. dist. 46, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2.
124. Tertull. de Pœnitent. c. 4, p. 123. ed. Rigalt. Paris. 1675.
125. Petavii. t. i. lib. x. c. 15, n. 5.
126. Sfondrati. Nodus Prædest. dissolutus, pars i, § i n. 2, p. 11, Rom. 1696.
127. S. Jerome. Comment. in Ep. ad Ephes. c. 1, int. op. spur. ed. Ben.
128. Id. in Isalam, c. 63.
129. S. Hilari. ep. ad S. Aug. Ep. cccxvi. int. epp. S. Aug.
130. *S. Paulinus. Ep. xxiv. ad Sever. n. 9.
131. S. Ambros. de libr. Paradis. c. viii. ed. Ben. Paris. 1836.
132. *S. Chrysost. Hom. xlii. de long. procem.
133. S. Aug. de spirit. et litt. c. 33, n. 58.
134. Concil. Trident. Sess. v. in decr. de pecc. orig. c. 5.
135. S. Leo. Serm. i. de Ascens.
136. Corn. à Lap. in loc. cit. Isaïæ.
137. Sfondrati. Nodus Prædest. pars 1, § 2, n. 21, passim.
138. S. Jerome. Comm. in 11 Cor. c. 5, app. t. xi. ed. Migne.
139. *S. Ambros. in Ps. lxxii.
140. Id. de Abel. lib. ii. c. 3.
141. Id. in Ps. cxviii. vers. iii. Serm. xiv. 41.
142. S. Leo. Serm. i. de Nat. Dom. c. 1.
143. S. Aug. Tract. xli. in Joann.
144. Id. Serm. xxii. de temp. in Ps. 67, v. 3, n. 9.
145. *Petrocorensis, t. 1, lib. 3, c. 4. (The author of a Theology for the use of the Seminary at Peterkau.)
146. S. Aug. Serm. de Symbol. ad Catechum. lib. i. c. 8.
147. S. Thom. in 1 Tim. ii. lect. 1.
148. Jansenius de Gratia Christi, lib. iii. c. 21, in fin. t. ii. p. 166, ed. Rhotomag. 1643.
149. S. Thom. 1a. q. 22, a. 2, ad 1, 2.
150. Id. de Malo, q. 5, ad 2.
151. S. Aug. lib. iv. cont. Jul. c. 8, et Ep. clxvi. ad Hieron. de orig. anim. hom.
152. Id. de lib. arb. lib. iii. c. 23.
153. S. Greg. Nazian. Serm. in Sanct. Lavac. n. 23.
154. *S. Greg. Nyss. de infant.
155. S. Thom. in 2 sent. dist. 33, q. 2, a. 2.
156. Id. de Malo. q. 5, a. 2.
157. S. Thom. in 2 sent. in loc. cit. infra ad 5.
158. Id. in 1 sent. dist. 46, q. 1, a. 1.
159. Innocent I. in Ep. ad Concil. Carthag. int. Epp. S. Aug. Ep. cclxxxii.
160. Cælestinus. Ep. ad Gallos, n. 6. See Rohrbacher's Hist. vol. viii. liv. 39, p. 82.
161. *S. Cyrill. Alexandr. lib. xi. de Jud.
162. S. Chrysost. Hom. xvi. in Ep. ad Rom. t. ix.
163. Id. Hom. lxxv. ad lxxvi. in Matt. t. vii.
164. S. Isidore Peleusiot. lib. ii. ep. 270. Bibl. Max. de la Bigne, t. vii.
165. S. Cyril. Jerus. Catech. xviii. c. 31.
166. *Jansenius de grat. Christi, t. iii. lib. iii. c. 10, 1.
167. S. Jerome. Ep. ad Cyprian. t. ii. p. 694, ed. Ben. 1699.

168. S. Ambros. in Ps. cxviii. v. 89, n. 13.
 169. S. Leo. Serm. xvi de Passione.
 170. S. Hilari. Tract. in Ps. lix. n. 4.
 171. Innocent I. Ep. ad Concil. Carthag. in loc. sup. cit.
 172. S. Aug. de lib. arb. lib. iii. c. 19, n. 5.
 173. Id. Id. c. 22, n. 65.
 174. S. Thom. in Ep. ad Heb. c. xii. lect. 3.
 175. Id. quæst. 14, de Veritat. a. 11. ad 1.
 176. *Scotus. 1 sent. dist. 46. q. un. ad 1 arg.
 177. Concil. Cologne. A.D. 1536. art. 32. Vld. Dict. Concil. ed. Migne.
 178. S. Thom. in Ep. ad Heb. ut sup.
 179. S. Ambros. in Ps. cxviii. in loc. sup. cit.
 180. Bellarmine. t. iv. de grat. et lib. arb. lib. i. c. 11.
 181. S. Bern. Serm. I. de Purif. B. V. M.
 182. Bellarmine, in loc. cit. lib. ii. c. 7.
 183. S. Thom. cont. gentes, lib. iii. c. 160.
 184. Id. Quæst. 24 de Veritat. a. 12, et la 2æ, q. 1. 9. a. 9.
 185. S. Thom. cont. gentes, in loc. cit. The quotation as given by St. Alphonsus is not quite as it stands in St. Thomas, from whose words the translation is made: "Quandocunque igitur occurrerit aliqui d. conveniens inordinato fini, repugnans fini debito, eligetur, nisi reducatur ad debitum ordinem." The word *order* is used here in a technical sense. *The order of the will to its true end.*
 186. Genet. Cyp. Theol. Thomist. t. iv. tr. 8, a. 6. § 1.
 187. S. Thom. in Joann. c. 1, lect. 5, ad verba "erat lux."
 188. Id. in 1 sent. dist. 48, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2.
 189. Id. in 4 sent. d. st. 20, q. 1, a. 1, quæst. 3. sol. 1.
 190. Id. in Heb. c. xii. lect. 3.
 191. Id. cont. gentes. lib. iii. c. 159, 160.
 192. Id. in loc. cit. c. 6.
 193. Gotti. Theol. t. i. tr. 5, q. 2.
 194. S. Thom. 3 p. q. 86, a. 1.
 195. *Petrocorensis. t. i. c. 3. q. 4.
 196. Bellarmine, t. iv. in loc. sup. cit.
 197. Soto. de nat. e grat. lib. i. c. 18.
 198. S. Aug. de nat. et grat. c. 67, et de lib. arb. lib. 3, n. 46.
 199. Id. de duab. animab. lib. ii. c. 12, n. 7.
 200. S. Thom. in 2 sent. dist. 28, q. 1, a. 3.
 201. Id. Quæst. 24. de Veritat. c. 14, ad 2.
 202. S. Aug. cont. Faust. lib. xxii. c. 78.
 203. Id. Lib. 1, Retract. c. 15.
 204. Id. Hom. xii. de 50. app. Serm. 253, 4.
 205. Id. de duab. animab. lib. ii. c. 12, n. 17.
 206. Id. c. 11.
 207. S. Jerome, lib. ii. cont. Jovin. t. iv. p. 2, p. 195.
 208. Tertullian. cont. Marc. lib. ii. c. 5, p. 334.
 209. Marcus Eremit. de Justif. ex Oper. Bibl. Max. de la Bigne t. v. 1052.
 210. S. Thom. 2a 2æ. q. 2. a. 4, ad 1.
 211. S. Aug. de Correp. et grat. c. xi. n. 32.
 212. Gotti. Theol. t. i, tr. 5, q. 2, dub 1, § 5 n. 41, 42.
 213. S. Prosper. de vocat. gent. c. xv. Bibl. Max. de la Bigne, t. viii. 181.
 214. Bellarmine, t. iv. de grat. et lib. arb. lib. ii. c. 7, in fin.
 215. S. Thom. in 2 sent. dist. 30, q. 1, art. 2, in corp.
 216. Concil. Trident. Sess. v. in decr. de pecc. orig.
 217. *Nuguez. 1, 2, q. 106, a. 8.
 218. Ledesma. Tractat. de divin. grat. auxiliis, art. xviii. quæst. unic. Salmanticæ. 1611.
 219. *Saléon. Jansen. Rediviv. p. 113.
 220. Bannez. in 1m, q. 23, a. 3, f. 412, Veuet. 1555.
 221. Gotti. Theol. t. i. q. 2, dub. 3, § 3, u. 22.
 222. S. Thom. Quæst. 24, de Veritat. a. 11.
 223. Id. cont. gentes. lib. iii. c. 161.
 224. Jansenius. de grat. Christi, lib. iii. c. 13, circa finem p. 139. "Delectatio relativè victrix." It is the distinct doctrine of the Jansenists, that as a material atom within the influence of two opposite attractions, by inevitable necessity obeys that which is most powerful, so is it with the human will. At each waking moment, they say, a man is attracted either by heavenly or earthly delight, or by both. If the first, he necessarily loves God; if the second, he necessarily sins; if the third, he necessarily obeys the "delectatio relativè victrix," that one of the two delights which is intrinsically the most intense. The liberty requisite for merit or demerit according to Jansenius' well known proposition, consists not in any real power of choice or freedom from necessity, but wholly in exemption from external violence.
 225. Id. in loc. cit. p. 139.
 226. Tourneley, Præl. Theol. t. iii. p. 1, q. 2, p. 235.

227. Graveson. Class i. Ep. 1, p. 9, op. omn. Venet 1740.
228. Berti. Augustin. Syst. Vindic. t. x diss. 4, c. 1, § 8, n. 14.
229. S. Aug. in .p. ad Galat. c. 5, n. 49.
230. Jansenius, de grat. Christi, lib. iv. c. 10, p. 184.
231. Id. c. 7, p. 175.
232. Id. c. 9, in fin. p. 183.
233. lib. iii. c. 15, p. 145.
234. Id. in loc. cit.
235. Id. lib. ii. c. 1, p. 34.
236. Id. lib. iii. c. 15, p. 143.
237. S. Aug. de grat. just. c. 3, resp. ad 3, rat.
238. Jansen. de grat. Christi, t. iii. lib. 7, c. 3, p. 209.
239. Id. lib. i. c. 7, p. 11.
240. Calvin. lib. 11, Institut. c. 2, n. 22.
241. Jansen. de statu nat. laps. lib. iv. c. 21, in fin. p. 264.
242. Id. c. 19, p. 259.
243. S. Thom. de Malo, q. 6, a. un.
244. Jansenius, de grat. Christi, lib. vii. c. 14, p. 335.
- Id. lib. viii. c. 3, p. 344.
- 245, 6. *Diroy's. de justa condemn. prop. 5, Jansen. c. 3.
247. *Salon. Baian. et Jansen redviv. append. p. 6.
248. Serry, t. iv. Disput. ix. de Merito Sanctorum, prælect. 2, 3.
249. S. Thom. de Malo, q. 6, a. un.
250. S. Aug. de duab. animab. c. 12, n. 17.
251. Petavius, t. iii. de opif. sex dier. lib. iii. c. 2, n. 7.
252. Id. n. 3.
253. S. Aug. in Ep. ad Galat. c. 5, n. 49.
254. Calvin. Resp. cont. Pighium, lib. iii. in fin. t. viii. int. op.
255. S. Aug. de Musica, lib. vi n. 29.
256. Id. Confess. lib. xiii. c. 10.
257. Id. de usica, ut sup.
258. Id. Tract. xxvi. in Joann. n. 7.
259. Id. in Ep. ad Galat. c. 5, n. 49.
260. * Id. Confess.
261. Id. Serm. clv. de verb. Apost. c. 9.
262. Id. de civ. Dei, lib. xii. c. 6.
263. Id. de lib. arb. lib. v. c. 27.
264. Id. de act. cum Fel. Manich. lib. ii. c. 5.
265. Bellarmine, t. iv. de grat. et lib. arb. lib. v. c. 27.
266. S. Aug. de grat. et lib. arb. c. 2, n. 4.
267. Id. de nuptiis, lib. ii. c. 3, n. 8.
268. Id. de grat. Christi, c. 45, n. 52.
269. Id. Enarr. in Ps. lvi. n. 1.
270. Id. de lib. arb. lib. ii. c. 1.
271. Id. de fide cont. Manich. c. 9, 10, t. viii. app. p. 26.
272. Id. de spirit. et litt. c. 34.
273. S. Aug. de act. cum Fel. Manich. lib. ii. c. 4.
274. Id. de grat. Christi, c. 4, 5.
275. *Giovvenino, Juénin. Inst. Theol. lib. v. p. 6, Diss. i. a. 3.
276. *Brescia. Fortun. da Jans. Syst. Confut. p. ii. n. 45 et 46, al. 346, n. 259.
277. Tournely, Prælect. Theol. t. iii. q. 3, ia prop. v. Jansen. q. 2, p. 303.
278. *Bourzéis de Collat. 4, c. 80.
279. Tournely, Præl. Theol. t. iii. p. 2, q. 9, a. 2, object. 6.
280. Berti. August. Syst. Vindic. Diss. v. c. 3, n. 4. 'In actu primo,' 'in actu secundo.' 'In actu primo' is much the same with our English expression *in power*, or *in liability*: 'in actu secundo,' *in act*. Thus at every moment we are subject to concupiscence 'in a tu primo,' because we are *liable* to be tempted by passion to disobey God's will: but we are only subject to it 'in actu secundo,' when we are *at that moment* tempted by passion to disobey God's will.
281. Gonet. Clymp. Theol. Thomist. t. iv. tr. 7.
282. Gotti. t. ii. tr. vi. de grat. q. 2, dub. 4, n. 4.
- P. 286. 'In sensu composito,' 'in sensu diviso.' The meaning of these phrases will best be shown by illustrations. I have full moral power to avoid all venial sins 'in sensu diviso'; that is, I can avoid each one of them: there is no one which I cannot avoid: but not 'in sensu composito'; for I have *not* moral power to avoid all venial sins collectively.
283. Macedo. Scrin. p. 88, 89.
284. Id. Cortina D. August. de Prædest. et grat. tract. ii. quæst. iii. art. 2, p. 293.
285. Berti. t. iii. lib. 18, c. 3, prop. iv.
286. Id. Aug. Syst. Vindic. Diss. iv. c. i. § 9, n. 5.
287. Id. t. iii. lib. 18, c. 8, prop. 5.
288. S. Aug. de peccat. merit. l. ii. c. 19.
289. Id. de nat. et grat. c. 69, 88.
290. Isambert. Disput. in 1m 2æ, tom. ii. quæst. 3, disput. 4, art. 3, 5, 7. Paris. 1643.
291. *Perron. Repl. lib. ii. observ. 3, c. 2.
292. *Le Moyné Alph. Resp. de don. grat. contr. Arnauld.
293. Tournely, ut sup. t. iii. 9, 7, a. 4, concl. 5, p. 533.
294. Noris. Opusc. Jans. err. Ca. umn. subl. c. 3, p. 189.
295. Noris. c. 3, § 1, p. 197.
296. Thomassinus L. Dogmat. Theol. tract. viii. Consensus scholæ

- de grat. c. viii. in med. Paris. 1639.
297. S. Thom. 1 p. q. 9, 49, a. 2, ad 3.
298. S. Aug. de nat. et grat. c. 69, n. 83.
299. Habert. Theol. Græc. Patr. lib. ii. c. 15, n. 7.
300. Id. c. 6, n. 1.
301. Id. c. 15, n. 3.
- 302.*Du Plessis d'Argentre. Diss. de multipl. gen. grat. See perhaps his Collect. Judic. de novis erroribus, t. iii. de Hær. Jansen.
303. Petavius. Theol. Dogm. t. i. lib. 10, c. 19. et 20, præsertim c. 19.
- 304.*Petrocorensis, t. ii. l. 6, q. 3, p. 489.
305. Medina. Scholas. Comment. in 1m 2æ, quæst. cix. a. 10, circa fin.
- 306.*Grenada L. de. conc. in fest. S. Matt. conc. i. n. 1.
307. Aguirre. Theol. Anselm. t. iii. disput. 125, 126, 128.
308. Boucat. Theol. Patrum. dogmat. tract. iv. dissert. 3. Paris. 1718. The exact passage not found.
- 309.*Buontempl. in pallad. Theol. Tr. de grat. disp. 1, q. 1.
310. Pullo. Sentent. in Summa lib. viii. pars. vi. c. 50, ad calcem. Paris. 1655.
- 311.*Brescia Fortunat. da Jans. syst. confut. p. 2, n. 225, p. 297.
- 312.*Richard of St. Victor. de erud. hom. lib. i. c. 30, et de statu integr. hom. tr. i. c. 13.
313. Soto de nat. et grat. lib. i. c. 30.
- 314.*Felicio Matthias cont. Calvin. Di t. 24. c. 29.
315. Vega Trident. Decr. lib. xiii. de lapsis et eorum reparatione, c. xli. in princip. p. 463. Complut. 1564.
316. Gotti. t. ii. tr. 6, de grat. q. 1, § 3, n. 19, p. 332.
317. S. F. de Sales, Traité de l'Amour de Dieu. liv. iii. c. 4, vol. vi. Œuv. comp. Paris. 1833.
318. Bellarmine, t. iv. de grat. et lib. arb. lib. ii. c. 5.
319. S. Thom. in ep. i. ad Corinth. c. i. lect. i.
320. Bellarmine, in loc. cit.
321. Concil. Trident. ess. vi. c. 11.
322. S. Aug. de nat. et grat. c. 44, n. 50.
323. Id. c. 69.
324. Id. lib. i. de divers. quæst. ad Simpl. q. 2, n. 21.
325. Sfondrati, Nodus Prædest. p. 1, § , n. 21, p. 181.
326. Noris, Jans. err. calumn. subl. c. 2, § 1.
327. S. Aug. Ep. ad Sixt. cxlvi.
328. S. Basil. lib. mor. summar. reg. 62, c. 3, t. ii. ed. Ben. Paris. 1839.
329. S. Chrysost. in c. 3, Ep. ad Galat. v. 21, vol. x. ed. Montf.
- 330.* Id. Serm. de Moysi.
331. S. Bern. Serm. v. de Quadrages.
332. S. Aug. de lib. arb. lib. iii. c. 19, n. 53.
333. Id. Lib. i. de divers. quæst. ad Simpl. q. 2, n. 21.
334. Id. Tract. xxvi. in Joann. n. 2.
335. Id. de lib. arb. lib. iii. c. 22, n. 65.
336. Id. de grat. et lib. arb. c. xv. n. 31, in fin.
337. Id. de grat. et lib. arb. c. xviii. n. 37.
338. Id. Epist. clvi. ad Hilar. c. q.
339. Id. Lib. i. de div. quæst. ad Simpl. q. 1, n. 14.
340. Id. de grat. et lib. arb. c. 16.
341. Id. de corrept. et grat. c. 5.
342. Id. id. c. 2, n. 4.
343. S. Thom. de veritat. q. 14, a. 11, ad 1.
344. Bellarmine, t. iv. de grat. et lib. arb. lib. ii. c. 8.
345. S. Bern. in Ps. xc. Serm. 15, n. 1.
346. S. Thom. 2, 2æ, q. 18, a. 4.
347. Id. id. q. 18, ad 3.
348. Id. id. q. 18, ad 2.
349. S. Bern. Serm. vii. in Ps. xc. n. 1.
350. Id. Serm. iii. Dom. vi. post. Pent. n. 6.
351. S. Aug. de corrept. et grat. c. 14, n. 45.
352. Id. de grat. et lib. arb. c. 21.
353. Id. de prædest. SS. c. 10.
354. Id. de grat. et lib. arb. c. 16.
355. Id. de don. persev. c. 13.
356. Id. de grat. et lib. arb. ut sup.
357. Id. lib. i. ad Bonif. c. 19, n. 37.
358. Id. de grat. Christi, c. 24, n. 25.
359. Id. de civ. Dei, lib. v. c. 9, n. 4, in fin.
360. Id. de grat. et lib. arb. c. 20.
361. S. Thom. de Malo, q. 6, ad 3.
362. Id. 2, 2æ, q. 24, a. 11.
363. Id. 1, 2æ, q. 10, a. 4, ad 1.

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